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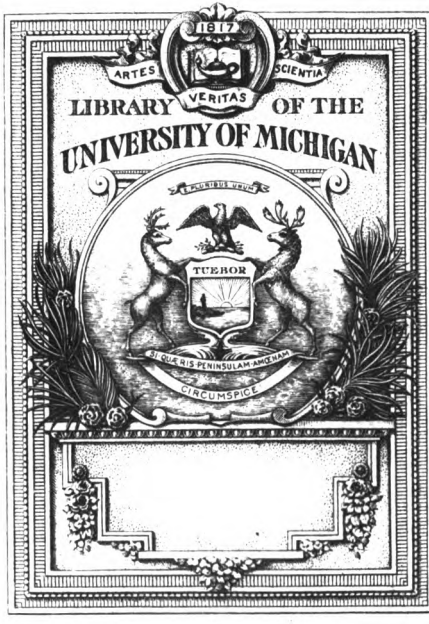
The works of Edgar Allan Poe ...

Edgar Allan Poe, Edwin Markham



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COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

THE WORKS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE

IN TEN VOLUMES

with an introduction by
EDWIN MARKHAM

VOLUME ONE
INTRODUCTIONS AND POEMS

FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
New York and London

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PREFACE—BIOGRAPHY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANCESTRY. John P. Poe, Esq., of Baltimore, states* that "John Poe, the progenitor of the family in America, emigrated from the north of Ireland a number of years before the Revolution, and purchased a farm in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, whence he afterwards removed to Cecil County, Maryland. At the time of the Revolution he was residing at Baltimore. His wife was Jane McBride, believed to be a sister of James McBride, Admiral of the Blue, and M.P. for Plymouth in 1785."

David, the eldest son of John Poe, on the authority of his daughter, Mrs. Maria Poe Clemm, the poet's aunt and mother-in-law, was born in Ireland six weeks before the family came to America. From the time of the Revolution he lived in Baltimore, to which place he brought as a bride, a Pennsylvania girl, Elizabeth Cairnes by name. During the Revolution he became quartermaster-general of the American forces in Baltimore.

*In the biography of Poe in Professor James A. Harrison's edition of "The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe," (T. Y. Crowell & Co., New York), from which the materials of the present article have been largely drawn.—EDITOR.

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The eldest son of General Poe was also named David. He was intended for the law, but at the age of twenty-five, in 1804, while at his uncle's home in Augusta, Ga., he joined a troupe of strolling actors known as the Hopkins Company. C. D. Hopkins, the light comedian of the company, died October, 1805, and shortly after this, David Poe married his widow, whose maiden name had been Elizabeth Arnold. She was of English birth and parentage, and had been born in mid-ocean when her mother was on the way to America.

After their marriage, David Poe and his wife became known as the "Virginia Comedians," and travelled up and down the Atlantic seaboard from Maine to South Carolina, giving theatrical performances. Three children were born to them at intervals of two years: William Henry Leonard, Edgar, and Rosalie.

BIRTH AND ADOPTION. On January 19, 1809, Edgar was born at Boston, Massachusetts. [Cf. title page of Poe's first book, Tamerlane, Boston, 1827, published anonymously, "By a Bostonian."]

On December 8, 1811, Elizabeth Arnold Poe died in Richmond, Va., shortly after the death of her husband, David Poe, at Norfolk, Va. Her eldest son was adopted by his grandfather, the General. He was a lad of much promise and became a cadet in the United States Navy. He died in July, 1831. Rosalie was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Mackenzie, of Richmond, Va., and baptized as Rose Mackenzie. She was of eccen-

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tric character, and died, in Washington, D. C., in 1874, an object of charity. Edgar was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. John Allan, of Richmond, Va., and received the name Edgar Allan in baptism. Mr. Allan was a member of the mercantile firm of Ellis & Allan, that, soon after Mr. Allan's adoption of Edgar Poe, became quite prosperous.

BOYHOOD. In June, 1815, Mr. Allan sailed with his wife, sister-in-law and adopted son, now a bright boy in his sixth year, to London, there to establish a branch house of his firm. They remained abroad for five years. Edgar was placed in Dr. Bransby's Manor House School at Stoke-Newington, then a suburb of London. [See his story, "William Wilson," Volume V., present edition.]

In 1820, the Allans returned home to America, and Edgar, now in his twelfth year, was coached for college successively by Messrs. Clarke and Burke, two Englishmen who had established classical academies in Richmond. Edgar at this time was a bright, fun-loving, attractive boy, with a special talent for declamation. It was during this period, says Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, in her book, "Edgar Poe and his Critics," that he met Mrs. Jane Stith Stanard, the mother of a schoolmate. She became the *confidante* of the motherless boy, and to her, under the poetic name of Helen which he substituted for prosaic Jane, Poe addressed the poem beginning,

"Helen, thy beauty is to me,"

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which, though written in the author's fourteenth year, contains, to quote the praise of James Russell Lowell, "a grace and symmetry such as few poets ever attain." Mrs. Stanard died in 1824, but for years to follow Poe celebrated the dear memory of her under the names of Lenore and Eleonora.

COLLEGE DAYS. February 14, 1826, Poe matriculated at the University of Virginia, at Charlottesville. He was a student during the second session of the university, which terminated December 15, 1826. He selected as his courses "Ancient and Modern Languages," and attended lectures in Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, and Italian. He is described as speaking and writing French and Latin with great fluency, and as reading Greek indifferently. He was noted in college as a student of literary tastes (he was Secretary of the Jefferson Literary Society), and as a teller of original weird tales. Unfortunately he had the reputation also of being an inveterate gambler and, on occasions, a hard drinker. Mr. William Wertenbaker, who was University Librarian when Poe was a student, said that Poe told him that his gambling debts amounted to $2,000. His excesses did not, however, come to the knowledge of the professors, among whom he was reputed a sober, quiet and orderly young man. At the close of the session he was officially mentioned as one of those who excelled in the Senior Latin and Senior French classes.

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LITERARY CAREER

1827. Returning home, Poe quarrelled with Mr. Allan on account of his gambling debts, and left Richmond for Boston. Here, probably in June, he published, anonymously, "Tamerlane and Other Poems," a thin volume containing less than forty pages. Few copies (there were but forty printed) are now known to be in existence. One was sold in 1900 for $2,550. In May of this year, Poe had enlisted at Boston in the United States Army, under the assumed name of Edgar A. Perry. He was assigned to the artillery, and, after a short service in Boston, was sent with his battery, first to Fort Moultrie, Charleston, S. C., and, one year later, to Fortress Monroe, Va.

1829. On January 1, Poe was appointed Sergeant Major, a promotion implying previous meritorious service. His habits at this time are reported to be "good and entirely free from drinking." On February 28, Mrs. Allan died, and, shortly after, Poe returned to Richmond on leave of absence.

On April 15, Poe, having procured a substitute, was honorably discharged from the army. Early in this year Poe published at Baltimore a thin octavo book of verse, containing seventy-one pages. It contained among other poems "Tamerlane," entirely rewritten, and "Al Aaraaf," published for the first time.

On October 5, Mr. Allan married Miss Louisa Gabriella Patterson, of New York, a very excellent woman, but of "masculine personality."

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Poe did not get on very well with this new mistress of the Allan home, and soon left it for West Point, having secured a cadetship there through the use of political influence and by representing himself as younger than he really was.

1830. On July 1, Poe entered West Point. Though standing high in his classes, third in French and seventeenth in mathematics in a class of eighty-seven, he was often disciplined for neglect of military duties. His reputation among the students was that of a literary genius, a brilliant but carping critic, and a constant drinker, but not to excess, of intoxicants. Finally, he was court-martialled and dismissed from the Military Academy for disobedience of orders and absence from roll-calls, guard-duty, and class-work, the sentence to take effect March 6, 1831.

He left West Point before this date, probably in December, 1830.

1831. Soon after leaving West Point, Poe published the third of his collections of verse, in a duodecimo volume of one hundred and twelve pages, dedicating the book to the West Point Cadets, from whom he had taken subscriptions in advance. It contained the best verse of his previous volumes, and such new poems as Israfel, and A Pæan (the first version of Lenore). It was introduced by a prefatory "Letter to B——."

1831-33. These years Poe seems to have spent in Baltimore, with his aunt, Mrs. Maria Poe Clemm. There are reports that he was jilted by

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a certain "Mary"; that he salved his injured feelings by publishing in a Baltimore paper a poem on her fickleness, entitled "To Mary ——"; and that he horsewhipped the lady's uncle who called him to account for his action.*

On October 12, 1833, Poe won the story prize of a hundred dollars offered by the *Baltimore Visiter*, with his "MS. Found in a Bottle."

1834. On March 27, Mr. Allan died of dropsy, leaving nothing to his adopted son.

On September 22, Edgar Allan Poe married his aunt Maria's daughter, Virginia Clemm, in Baltimore. At that time she was in her thirteenth year, and he in his twenty-sixth.

1835. "Berenice" was published in the March number of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, of Richmond. Poe soon after was engaged by the paper as critical reviewer, on the recommendation of John P. Kennedy, author of "Horseshoe Robinson," and one of the judges in the prize story contest of the *Baltimore Visiter*.

In September, Poe, with his wife and wife's mother, is found in Richmond, where he had been engaged as literary editor of the *Messenger* on a salary of $520 a year, which was soon increased to $800. Up to this month Poe had contributed nine articles to the *Messenger:* "Morella," "Lionizing," "Hans Pfaall," "The Assignation (The Visionary)," "The Coliseum"

* "See article "Poe's Mary" in *Harper's Magazine* for March, 1889.

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(poem), "Bon-Bon," "Shadow," "Loss of Breath," and "King Pest."

1835-36. From December, 1835, to November, 1836, Poe contributed eighteen articles to the *Messenger,* including "Metzengerstein," "Scenes from Politian" (poem), "The Duc De L'Omelette," "Four Beasts in One (Epimanes)," and "A Tale of Jerusalem."

1837. In January, Poe severed his connection with the *Messenger.* During his editorship the magazine had increased in circulation from 700 to 5,000, and had achieved a national reputation, especially as a critical review.

In January and February, the *Messenger* published the beginning of the "Narrative of A. Gordon Pym."

In January, Poe came to New York with his family, and soon after is found in a house at 113½ Carmine street, where Mrs. Clemm took in boarders. Here Poe completed the "Narrative of A. Gordon Pym."

1838. The "Narrative of A. Gordon Pym" was published by Harper Brothers, New York, and reprinted by the Putnams in London, where it was taken by many to be a true story of discovery.

During the year, Poe removed with his family to Philadelphia, at that time the center of literary activity in America. Here he remained until 1844. His work during this period was contributed chiefly to Philadelphia publications. In the August number of the *American Museum* appeared "Ligeia," and in the December num-

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ber, "How to Write a Blackwood Article," and "A Predicament (The Scythe of Time)."

1839. Early in the year "Silence: A Fable," was published in the *Baltimore Book;* and "The Devil in the Belfry" in the Philadelphia *Saturday Chronicle and Mirror of the Times,* for May. Poe was at this period a literary hack, doing such tasks as supplying the text for an illustrated work on conchology.

During this year, Poe began to contribute to the *Gentleman's Magazine,* owned by William E. Burton, a famous comedian and theatrical manager. Besides a number of poems there appeared in the magazine "The Fall of the House of Usher" (September), "William Wilson" (October), "Morella" (November), "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion" (December).

1840. "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," by Edgar A. Poe, in two volumes, appeared from the press of Lea & Blanchard, Philadelphia. This was a republication of the chief of those tales already mentioned.

"The Man of the Crowd" appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December.

Poe fell out with Burton, whose editor he had become, and contemplated starting a magazine of his own. A prospectus was issued announcing that the *Penn Monthly,* Edgar A. Poe, editor, would appear January 1, 1841. The enterprise did not advance beyond the prospectus.

1841. Burton sold his *Gentleman's Magazine* to George R. Graham, to be combined with the latter's *Casket,* and appear as *Graham's Maga-*

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zine. Burton generously stipulated that his "young editor" should be "taken care of" in the new periodical. *Graham's Magazine,* under Poe's editorship, increased its circulation from 5,000 to 37,000. In it were published "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (April), "A Descent into the Maelström" (May), "The Island of the Fay" (June), "The Colloquy of Monos and Una" (August), and "Never Bet the Devil Your Head" (September). "Three Sundays in a Week" appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* for November 27. During this year Poe studied and wrote much on the subject of cryptography or secret writing, solving no less than ninety-nine cryptograms of every variety which were sent him from all parts of the country.

1842. In this year appeared in *Graham's Magazine* "The Oval Portrait" (April) and "The Masque of the Red Death" (May); in *The Gift,* the tale "Eleonora," and in *Snowden's Lady's Companion* "The Landscape Garden" (October), and two instalments of "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" (November, December), the story being completed in the number for February, 1843.

1843. In April, Poe resigned his editorial position upon *Graham's Magazine,* owing to his resentment at finding, on his return to the office after a short absence, that Graham had engaged Dr. Rufus W. Griswold as a temporary substitute. Again he contemplated issuing a new magazine, this time to be called *The Stylus.*

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Nothing came of the project. Then he tried for a government position and failed, owing, it is conjectured, to the general reputation he was beginning to acquire for "irregularities" of conduct. These "irregularities" Poe ascribed in a letter written after the death of his wife, to his racking anxiety about her health. About this time she ruptured a blood vessel in singing; frequent hemorrhages followed, and thereafter she remained an invalid whose death was constantly expected. In this year Poe contributed to the only numbers that ever appeared of James Russell Lowell's *Pioneer,* "The Tell-Tale Heart," a tale, (January), "Lenore," a poem, (February), and "The Rationale of Verse," an essay, (March.) "The Pit and the Pendulum" appeared in *The Gift* early in the year. *The Philadelphia Dollar Newspaper* published June 21-28 "The Gold-Bug," the prize story of a contest conducted by the new publication. "The Black Cat" appeared in the *Philadelphia United States Saturday Post* for August 19.

During the year, Poe projected an edition of his tales, but only No. 1 ever appeared—"The Prose Romances of Edgar A. Poe," 8vo, Philadelphia. The volume was in paper covers, and contained "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Man that was Used Up."

In November, Poe delivered a lecture in Philadelphia on "The Poets and Poetry of America," in which his criticism of Griswold as editor and compiler is believed to have caused the enmity

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of the man who was to become his literary executor.

1844. In April, Poe is found in New York, residing in Greenwich street, near Rector. Here he wrote "The Balloon-Hoax," which, on its appearance in the *New York Sun,* April 13, 1844, created a tremendous sensation.

Other tales of the year were: "The Elk (Morning on the Wissahiccon)," which appeared in *The Opal;* "A Tale of the Ragged Mountains," in *Godey's Lady's Book* for April; "Mesmeric Revelation," in the *Columbian Magazine* for August; "The Premature Burial," in an unidentified Philadelphia publication; "The Oblong Box," in *Godey's Lady's Book* for September; "The Angel of the Odd," in the *Columbian Magazine* for October; "Thou Art the Man," in *Godey's Lady's Book* for November; and "The Literary Life of Thingum Bob, Esq.," in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for December.

Poe's first engagement in New York was with Nathaniel P. Willis as critic and sub-editor upon the latter's *Evening Mirror.* Willis thus describes the method of Poe's introduction to him:

"Our first knowledge of Mr. Poe's removal to this city was by a call which we received from a lady who introduced herself to us as the mother of his wife. She was in search of employment for him, and she excused her errand by mentioning that he was ill, that her daughter was a confirmed invalid, and that their circumstances were such as compelled her taking it upon herself. The countenance of this lady, made beautiful and saintly with an evidently complete giving up of her life to privation and sorrowful tenderness, her gentle and mournful voice

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urging its plea, her long-forgotten but habitually and unconsciously refined manners, and her appealing and yet appreciative mention of the claims and abilities of her son, disclosed at once the presence of one of those angels upon earth that women in adversity can be. . . .

"Mr. Poe was employed by us, for several months, as critic and sub-editor. This was our first personal acquaintance with him. He resided with his wife and mother at Fordham, a few miles out of town, but was at his desk in the office from nine in the morning till the evening paper went to press. With the highest admiration for his genius, and a willingness to let it atone for more than ordinary irregularity, we were led by common report to expect a very capricious attention to his duties, and occasionally a scene of violence and difficulty. Time went on, however, and he was invariably punctual and industrious. With his pale, beautiful, and intellectual face, as a reminder of what genius was in him, it was impossible, of course, not to treat him always with deferential courtesy, and, to our occasional request that he would not probe too deep in a criticism, or that he would erase a passage colored too highly with his resentments against society and mankind, he readily and courteously assented—far more yielding than most men, we thought, on points so excusably sensitive. With a prospect of taking the lead in another periodical, he, at last, voluntarily gave up his employment with us, and, through all this considerable period, we had seen but one presentment of the man—a quiet, patient, industrious, and most gentlemanly person, commanding the utmost respect and good feeling by his unvarying deportment and ability."

1845. It was in the *Evening Mirror* that "The Raven" appeared on January 29. Within the year Poe published it in five other slightly variant editions. One of these was as the first poem of a duodecimo collection of verse entitled "The Raven and Other Poems. By Edgar A. Poe. New York: Wiley & Putnam. 1845."

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This volume had a companion in "Tales by Edgar A. Poe," issued at the same time by the same publishers. The collection of verse was dedicated to Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, whose enthusiastic admiration, as well as that of Robert Browning, whom she was shortly to marry, had been elicited by "The Raven." Indeed, the whole world of letters had been stirred to its center by the poem. In France a Poe cult began. Charles Baudelaire, author of "Les Fleurs du Mal," translated the American poet in a spirit and with a technique worthy of his master; Mallarmé, later, reproduced "The Raven" in magnificent form; and the engraver Quantin published a series of illustrations of Poe's Tales* engraved from pictures by leading French artists. Later, Gustave Doré illustrated "The Raven."

"The Raven" had been composed some time before 1845 at a country homestead whose site is now occupied by a factory on Eighty-fourth street, between Amsterdam avenue and Broadway, New York. The homestead was owned by Patrick Brennan, who in the summer of 1843 received as guests Poe and his wife and his mother-in-law.

The "other periodical" referred to by Willis as the one for which Poe left the *Evening Mirror*, was *The Broadway Journal*. This periodical Poe published in conjunction with Messrs. Briggs, Brisco, and Watson until towards the

* Eight of these form the frontispieces of Vols. II. to IX. of the present edition.—EDITOR.

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end of the year. In it he reprinted, with careful revision, the larger number of his previously published tales and poems, and here he conducted his bitter attack on "Longfellow and other plagiarists."

In the same year were published "The Purloined Letter" (*The Gift*); "The Thousand and Second Tale of Scheherazade" (*Godey's Lady's Book* for February); "Some Words with a Mummy" (*American Whig Review* for April); "The Power of Words" (*Democratic Review* for June); "The Imp of the Perverse" (*Graham's Magazine* for July); "The System of Dr. Tarr and Prof. Fether" (*Graham's Magazine* for November); and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (*American Whig Review* for December).

On December 26, Poe announced the demise of the *Broadway Journal*, "the objects being fulfilled, as far as regards myself personally, for which [it] was established."

1846. During the winter of 1845-46, Poe became a social lion, receiving many invitations to recite "The Raven" and other of his poems. It was probably to satisfy the universal inquiry of how he came to write the famous poem, that he wrote an article on "The Philosophy of Composition," which appeared in *Graham's Magazine* for April.

From May to October he contributed to *Godey's Lady's Book* a series of articles on "The Literati," in which thirty-eight American men and women of letters were discussed in frank and crisp and thoroughly characteristic style. One

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article on Thomas Dunn Brown [English], the author of "Ben Bolt," called forth a rejoinder from Mr. Brown in which Poe's personal character was attacked. Poe brought suit and recovered $225 in damages. With this money he furnished a little Dutch cottage* at Fordham, Westchester County, N. Y., then, as now, a residential suburb of the metropolis. Hither he removed in early summer from Amity street, New York.

As autumn came on Virginia, the wife of Poe, sank rapidly in consumption. The Poes were very poor, and charitable friends came to their aid. Among these was Marie Louise Shew (afterwards Mrs. Houghton) to whom the grateful Poe addressed a poem "To M. L. S——," which appeared in the *Home Journal* for March 13, 1847. In 1848 he wrote her another poem, "To —— ——." [Marie Louise]. It was she who suggested to the poet the subject of "The Bells."

1847. Virginia Poe died January 30. The effect of the sad event on her husband is strikingly indicated by the fact that he published but three articles of literary value, the poem to Mrs. Shew already referred to; "The Domain of Arnheim" (*Columbian Magazine* for March), an enlargement of "The Landscape Garden"; and "Ulalume," (*American Whig Review* for December).

1848. All this while, however, Poe was cogitating on great themes, broad as the universe and infinite as eternity. The result was "Eureka,"

* See frontispiece to Vol. X., present edition.—EDITOR.

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delivered as a lecture early in 1848, with the proceeds of which Poe hoped to launch his old project of *The Stylus*. As a lecture the work proved a sad failure. Poe then had it published in book form (Geo. P. Putnam, New York, 1848. pp. 143. 12mo. Republished in London by Chapman).

"Eureka" has been variously criticised by Poe's editors, some calling it one of his "pseudo-scientific" hoaxes, and others, a work of profound philosophy. In all his conversations and correspondence touching upon it Poe certainly took the most reverent and even rapturous attitude toward what in its preface he denominated a "Book of Truths," a "Prose Poem." In one letter he gives the following synopsis of its argument:

GENERAL PROPOSITION. Because nothing was, therefore all things are.

1. An inspection of the *universality* of gravitation—of the fact that every particle tends not to any one common point, but to every other particle, suggests perfect totality of *absolute unity* as the source of the phenomenon.

2. Gravity is but the mode in which is manifested the tendency of all things to return into their original unity.

3. I show that the law of the return—*i.e.*, the law of gravity—is but a necessary result of the necessary and sole possible mode of equable irradiation of matter through a *limited* space.

4. Were the universe of stars (contradistinguished from the universe of space) unlimited, no worlds could exist.

5. I show that unity is nothingness.

6. All matter, springing from unity, sprang from nothingness, *i.e.*, was created.

7. All will return to unity, *i.e.*, to nothingness.

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Early in 1848, Poe received an anonymous poetic valentine. Later in the year, when on a lecture tour, he met the writer, Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, at her home in Providence, R. I. They became engaged to marry, but the intervention of her friends, who were alarmed at reports of Poe's bad habits and eccentricities, broke off the match. In later years (1860) she published a book "Edgar Poe and his Critics," in which the character of her lover is loyally defended.

1849. During this, the last year of his life, Poe published little else than poems to those women who were near to him or dear to his memory: "To My Mother" (Mrs. Clemm), published in the *Flag of Our Union;* "A Valentine," an acrostic to Frances Sargent Osgood, published in *Sartain's Union Magazine* for March; "For Annie" (Mrs. Richmond, of Lowell, Mass.), published in the *Flag of Our Union,* and "Annabel Lee" (claimed by Mrs. Whitman to have been evoked by one of her poems), referring to his dead wife. It was printed by the *New York Tribune* October 9, just after the news came of the author's death. "The Bells," already referred to as originating in a suggestion of Mrs. Shew, appeared after Poe's death in *Sartain's Union Magazine* for November.

In June, Poe left New York for a trip to Richmond. He stopped at Philadelphia with John Sartain, the artist and publisher, where Poe exhibited signs of dementia. Three weeks after leaving New York he is found in Richmond,

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seemingly well and sane. Evidently with the purpose of starting *The Stylus* with the lady's money, he renewed his addresses to an old flame of his boyhood days (Miss Royster), who was now a well-to-do widow (Mrs. Shelton).

He was fêted by Richmond citizens, and a subscription lecture ("The Poetic Principle," published, after his death, in *Sartain's Union Magazine* for October, 1850) was arranged for him.

With the proceeds of this lecture ($1500) Poe started north. He reached Baltimore during an election. Whether he went upon a debauch, or was drugged by political agents to be used as a "repeater"—both explanations are offered—on the night of Wednesday, October 3, he was taken to a hospital on North Broadway, suffering from a violent brain fever. Here, without recovering consciousness according to some witnesses, with lucid intervals according to others, he lingered until death came, on Sunday morning, October 7.

With Mrs. Maria Poe Clemm, his aunt and mother-in-law, Edgar Allan Poe lies buried beneath the Poe monument erected November 17, 1875, at Baltimore.

EDITIONS OF POE'S WORKS

1849-56. Dr. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, whom Poe had made his literary executor, copyrighted in 1849, and published in 1850, an edition in four volumes of "The Works of the Late Edgar Allan Poe," with a memoir by Griswold, and "notices of his life and genius by N. P. Willis and J. R. Lowell." The memoir maligned the personal

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character of Poe, and grossly erred in its statements of fact. In 1853 Griswold issued an edition in three volumes, with a preface by Mrs. Maria Clemm, and in 1856 published a final edition in four volumes.

In *1880*, John H. Ingram, an Englishman, published an edition in four volumes of "The Tales and Poems by Edgar Allan Poe" (John C. Nimmo, London). This edition was as laudatory of Poe as Griswold's had been derogatory.

In *1884*, Richard Henry Stoddard edited the "Fordham Edition" of the works of Poe (Armstrong & Son, New York). His work is founded on Griswold.

In *1895*, Edmund Clarence Stedman and Professor George E. Woodberry (the author of a Life of Poe, 1884), gathered, from original sources, the best collection of the works of Poe that had hitherto been issued. It was published by Stone & Kimball, of Chicago.

In *1902*, Professor Charles F. Richardson edited the "Booklovers' Arnheim Edition" of Poe's works (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York), the most beautiful typographically of all the collections.

In the same year, James A. Harrison, professor in Poe's own University of Virginia, brought out "The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe" (T. Y. Crowell & Co., New York), a monumental work, comprehending, seemingly, every scrap of writing that Poe ever published. The data of the present article have been derived largely from its exhaustive and voluminous biography

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and bibliography, the material for which Professor Harrison drew from preceding lives of Poe, such as that by W. Fearing Gill (Chatto, London, 1877), the correspondence and reminiscences of acquaintances of Poe, university archives, etc., etc.

The present edition is intended for the book reader, rather than the book collector. It contains all of the poems unquestionably written by Poe; every known work of his in the nature of fiction save one, "The Journal of Julius Rodman," an incomplete and rather stupid story of western adventure published anonymously as a serial in Burton's *Gentleman's Magazine* during 1840, and discovered by Professor Harrison to be Poe's work; Poe's philosophical essays, and such critical articles as have enduring value—nearly all that are omitted dealing with the more or less ephemeral books and authors of the day.

The works of Poe are presented, so far as possible, in topical arrangement. The lines of demarcation between tales of adventure, of mystery, of horror, of fantasy, and of Poe's peculiar order of extravagant humor, are very difficult to establish, as Poe himself recognized when he gave his own edition the comprehensive, but aptly descriptive title, "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque."

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INTRODUCTION—THE ART AND GENIUS OF POE

BY EDWIN MARKHAM

Edgar Allan Poe is the most tragic figure in our literary history, and the figure that casts from our shores the longest shadow across the world. He was a great intellect and a sad heart.

He has left one of the two or three most magical and compelling collections of tales written since the Arabian Nights—tales of ratiocination and of mystery, a collection that fascinates us like the Alhambra under moon and cloud, with the dark splendor of its halls, its spacious courts, its lofty pillars, its labyrinthine passages.

He has left us also our first body of significant American criticism: reviews, too often, of nobodies, the ephemera of letters; reviews written in haste to keep the bubble on the pot, yet unpurchasable and inflexible in loyalty to letters. Discussion of these matters would make a long and important paper by itself. But it is of the poetry alone that we must here speak.

Poe, like Gray and Keats, has given us only a frugal volume of verse, and yet like these poets

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he has left a precious and priceless possession to mankind. America has no one but Emerson and Lowell to contest his poetical primacy.

Poe brought to the art of poetry an acute analytical mind, and a vivid feeling for form, as well as a shaping imagination and a passionate love of beauty. He willed to build his structure of verse upon poetic laws as exact as those that swing the planets in their orbits. He has the distinction of being the only American who, like Coleridge and Wordsworth in England, and Bürger in Germany, had a definite theory of poetry and rigorously followed it.

Poe declares that the origin of poetry lies in a thirst for a wilder Beauty than Earth supplies —that poetry itself is the imperfect effort to quench this immortal thirst. He defines the poetry of words as the rhythmical creation of beauty, and avers that the sole arbiter is Taste, which stands between Pure Intellect and the Moral Sense. That pleasure, he says, which is at once the most pure, the most elevating and the most intense, is derived from the contemplation of the Beautiful. Only in the contemplation of Beauty do we attain that elevation of the soul which we recognize as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, and from Passion, which is the excitement of the Heart.

The fervors of passion, or even the lessons of truth, may go into a poem; but they must be toned down in proper subjection to that Beauty which is the atmosphere and real essence of the

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poem. It goes without saying, then, that Poe stood for "art for art's sake," that he set his face inflexibly against the heresy of "The Didactic." He would not have it that the ultimate object of poetry is truth, that every poem should preach a moral. Poe was certainly right: a poem built in beauty is its own excuse for being. For the soul is enlarged not so much by mere dnowledge or bare skeleton of truth, as by the kilation of the imagination. The path through beauty is the most direct path of ascension to the Divine.

This lofty and noble conception of poetry was doubtless in the mind of young Poe, however dimly, when in 1827 he issued his first trembling little volume of verse, "Tamerlane and Other Poems"—a volume attempted again in 1829, and finally, in 1831, republished with many deft touches of the revising tool.

The long poem "Tamerlane" shows, as in Marlowe's case, that the lean of the young poet's soul was toward vastness and splendor. The manner of the poem is dominated by Byron, that plunging planet that was then disturbing the poise of so many lesser luminaries in the poetic sky. "Al Aaraaf," a dullish story of a purgatory, placed on Tycho Brahe's wonderful lost star, suggests the specious learning and the forced sentiment in "Lalla Rookh."

In Poe's 1831 volume we find "Israfel," "The Doomed City," "To Helen," "Irene," and "The Pæan,"—poems that were revised in the course of years and are now known as "Israfel,"

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"The City in the Sea," "To Helen," "The Sleeper," and "Lenore."

Around the last three of these poems hangs the darkness of the most tragic event in Poe's early life, the death of Mrs. Stanard, the mother of a schoolboy friend. When young Poe first met this lovely woman she took him by the hand and spoke to him in tender words of greeting and sympathy. We are told that he was so penetrated by her gracious words that he was deprived of the power of speech, almost of consciousness, and that he returned home in a dream, hearing the voice that had made the desolate world so suddenly beautiful. She became the comforter of his boyish griefs and the Helen of his early song. When she died his heart was inconsolable, and found voice in "The Sleeper," a poem drenched with the mystery, the ethereal beauty of a summer night. Forever the beautiful dead lies there tranced in silentness and perfect peace.

In "Lenore" Poe speaks again of the beloved dead. It is not a homely cry of the heart, but a burst of martial bugles. Amid the perfections of this poem, however, is one inexcusable blemish, a bald phrase of the prose man—"And when she fell *in feeble health.*" Here is a mud-ball stuck upon the radiant front of the rainbow. But even this flaw is half forgotten in the stately repetends and musical marches of the poem. In "Lenore" the poet no longer peers and wonders. From a height of exultation he hurls down defiance upon the grim warders of death:

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"Avaunt! to-night my heart is light. No dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a Pæan of old days!"

At last, in his "Helen," the dead woman becomes to the poet the eidolon of supernal beauty:

"Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicéan barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
To his own native shore."

The poem contains two superb lines, where all are beautiful. In the early form of the verses, the two lines ran thus:

"To the beauty of fair Greece
And the grandeur of old Rome."

This mediocre couplet was afterward transfigured into

"To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome"—

two mighty lines that compress into a brief space all the rich, high, magnificence of dead centuries. The change of a few words and what a chasmal change in the sound and splendor of a line! Poe never surpassed the serene exaltation and divine poise of this poem. It shows his passion for a crystalline perfection. Save for a false rhyme and a dubious phrase or two, the poem is perfect, inevitable, having the careless ease of a young lily swaying on the stem. In its wandering music and flower-like freshness of form, it

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stands with the deathless lyrics; with "Tears, Idle Tears," "Rose Aylmer," and the rest.

"The Raven," written many years later than these early lyrics to beauty and death, is the final threnody in memory of his lost Lenore, once the queenliest dead, but now elected to live immortally young in his somber palaces of song. "The Raven" has gone into the languages of many nations as a requiem of imperial affliction, a poem that takes rank with the unworded and unearthly harmonies of "The Dead March in Saul."

How did it spring into existence, this structure of mystery and grief? The idea in a work of genius frequently rises from some chance word or incident that falls into the artist's life,—the remark of a friend, the look of a face. Genius is the power to take a hint. Whence did Poe get the idea of the Stygian raven of his poem? Perhaps from the raven in Dickens' "Barnaby Rudge."

Poe is known to have made a magazine study of this novel, suggesting a better use of the bird as a character, saying: "The raven, too, might have been made more than we now see it, a portion of the conception of the fantastic Barnaby. Its croakings might have been prophetically heard in the course of the drama. Its character might have performed in regard to that of the idiot, much the same part as does in music the accompaniment in respect to the air."—Here Poe outlines a use of "this ungainly fowl" which later on he actually makes in his famous poem.

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The early poem "Lenore" is the first study of the Raven thesis, and in it we find the sonorous name Lenore, a name which may have been wafted to his mind from Bürger's ballad of "Lenore," which had attracted the attention of England in the early years of the nineteenth century. Doubtlesss Poe found the suggestion of his meter in Mrs. Browning's "The Courtship of Lady Geraldine," where we find a line—

"With a murmurous stir uncertain in the air, a purple curtain"—

which sounds strangely like one of the lines in "The Raven." But the originality of Poe's poem is not shaken by the critics, who have sifted the world to find its sources. What he borrows becomes bone of his intellectual bone. Casual borrowings by a poet are justifiable, when they are assimilated, when they suffer a sea-change into a rarer beauty. If he finds brick he must leave it marble.

Some of the phrasings of the poem, such as "Sir, said I, or madam;" "little relevancy bore;" "the fact is I was napping"—such colloquialisms seem to disturb the austere tone of the poem. But I would not wish these oddities removed. These colors of every-day, these glints of the grotesque, flashing upon the background of the poem, help to heighten the final impression of tragic mystery. Nor need we be concerned greatly that the poet says that the shadow of the raven "lies floating on the floor," when the bird is described as sitting on a bust above the door,

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and presumably above the lamp. Such flaws serve to shake a little the verisimilitude and strict organic unity of the poem. But they do not disturb its extraordinary elevation and somber beauty.

In "The Philosophy of Composition,"* Poe gives his own statement of the laws and processes which he claims to have followed in the composition of "The Raven." He makes the work of construction appear as simple as fence-building. His explanation, at first blush, sounds forced and inadequate, a mere riot of mystification; and yet there may be a measure of truth in the explanation, seeing that Poe had a highly analytical mind and a strict theory of poetics. It was natural to the man to attempt to balance the wings of his imagination with the weight of his intellect.

However all this may be, it is clear that his explanation does not explain the core of the matter: the secret of the secret is not disclosed. He does not tell us where he found the music, the fire, the shaping imagination. So after all is said, we can still call "The Raven," not a thing of rule and recipe, but a creation of the true frenzy, that carries a cry of the heart.

There are noble lines in "The Raven," but great lines, and even great passages, are not the chief test of a poem. The final test of a poem is its total impression. And the total impression of "The Raven," with its weird beauty and sustained energy, is deeply, nobly serious.

*The article following this Introduction.

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In spite of all critical assaults, the poem stands secure in its dark immortality—safe among the few remarkable poems of the world.

The "Haunted Palace" was in Poe's day the subject of a hot controversy, many believing (Poe leading the host) that Longfellow had taken from this poem his idea for "The Beleaguered City." Others again affirmed that both poets had got their inspiration from Tennyson's "Deserted House." Poe's poem is an allegory of a mind in ruins, a poem terribly beautiful, whose words seem to come in stately batallions, with bugles blowing. It tells of a splendid palace:

> "Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
> On its roof did float and flow,
> (This—all this—was in the olden
> Time long ago.)
> And every gentle air that dallied,
> In that sweet day,
> Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
> A winged odor went away."

"The Haunted Palace" is a sermon, but it is one where the poet furnishes only the text: the reader supplies the sermon. The poem ends with two powerful lines:

> "A hideous throng rush out forever
> And laugh—but smile no more."

"Israfel," another of the lyrics descended from his youth, is full of the rush of silver

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phrases, the careless music of a young god. It is ungracious, perhaps, to cavil at a dint in this lyric gold; but it does seem that the second stanza jars upon the high harmony of this song. Certainly the word "even" is an ineffectual rhyme; and the remark concerning "the enamored moon" blushing with love has the ring of sentimentality instead of sentiment. It is the paint of emotion, not the fire. One is sensitive to these defects since the poem, as a whole, is tremulous with a beauty wilder than the beauty of Earth. Here is no thought of the loved and unreturning dead, no mood of inconsolable memories. The soul is thrilled as with a rush of raptures from a rift in the delicate sky of morning.

Browning in "Abt Vogler," Coleridge in "Kubla Khan," have built up fair imaginations of tower and dome and minaret, but the wizardry of Poe in his "City in the Sea" has left us the most rare, the most mysterious, of all such ethereal structures. This city in the dim, still, western sea is the thronéd place of Death, where are gathered in long night-times the souls that have passed through the body.

The description of the gloomy light of the lurid waters upon the lofty, pallid walls fretted with garlands of carven stone—garlands of "viol, violet, and vine." is builded up with a curious care that sends upon the mind the sense of the delicate austerities of the Parthenon. Never before has the "palpable obscure" been bodied forth with a more cunning and gloomy imagination, than in this fantasy of a city iso-

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lated, accursed, laved by seas "hideously serene," where from his central tower,

"Death looks gigantically down."

The music of the opening stanza is in Poe's best manner of "sonorous metal, blowing martial sounds." The last stanza gives an example of music muted and retarded to echo the sense, carrying out the idea of the dull tide, the feeble stir, the gradual hissing and bubbling of the slow settling and sinking of the lost and lamentable city.

Poe's "Bells" is the finest example in our language of the suggestive power of rhyme and of the echo of sound to sense. It is hardly credible that the poet who conceived this fantasy with its fine madness, could have written "For Annie," one of the poems composed in those dark, last days when life was stretching before him like a rainy sea. On its constructive side it is a fugue, from which proceeds a haunting music. But what can we say severe enough of the poetry of such verses as these?

"Of a water that flows
With a lullaby sound
From a spring *but a very few*
Feet under ground,—
From a cavern not very far
Down underground."

"Annabel Lee," perhaps the simplest of Poe's ballads, and one inspired by his lost Virginia, is full of little winds of melody and touches of

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ideal light. It is a poetical version of his prose idyl, "The Valley of the Many-Colored Grass"* and it forms the final page of his lyrical ritual of bereaved love.

Poe is aloof from nature; he withdraws from actuality into the perilous hollow kingdom of Childe Roland of the Dark Tower, into "the dim, deserted courts where Dis bears sway." Yet each of Poe's poems has a basis in life. Even his "Ulalume"—frailest of cloud structures—is not pillared all in air, although its mysticism seems stretched to the breaking point. I find momentous meaning in its gray obscurity—a deep drama of temptation and memory. As elsewhere, Poe's habit of personification gives a clue to the mystery. The poem chronicles in symbol the collision between an ignoble passion and the memory of an ideal love.

The poet wanders under the moon with Psyche his soul—Psyche the obscure voice of conscience. He is down by the dark tarn of Auber, in the woodland of Weir, the misty region of sorrowful remembrance. About him are wide, desolate landscapes; above him, drear, ash-colored autumnal skies, all suggestive of the aloneness and desolation of each man's soul in his inward battle. Once before he had wandered here under the cypresses when his heart was hot and volcanic with sorrow for his lost love, but now his memory is clouded.

As the night wanes he beholds the orb of As-

*"Eleonora."

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tarte, the goddess of carnal love. He feels that she is touched by his sorrow,

> "And has come past the stars of the Lion
> To point us the path to the skies."

Psyche protests and urges flight from temptation. The poet persists and quiets her scruples, and the two pass on till stopped by a tomb across the road—the tomb of his lost Ulalume. Suddenly he sees that his temptation has been of the demon. He is confronted and recalled to honor by the chaste memory of his lost love—his love for one wild hour forgotten.

"Ulalume" has been reviled as doggerel run mad, and exalted as a miracle of melody. It is certainly too labored and mechanical to carry emotional conviction. In tone color it is like some wild improvisation, in a minor mood—some primitive Icelandic musical *motif* recurring over and over like the wash of surf on sandy shores.

Technically "Ulalume" is a study in the use of the repetend. The two continually alternating rhymes of each nine-line stanza; the close sameness, yet delicate variation, of the third and second lines, coming in like the sobbing catch of the breath; the lift and beat of the last four lines of each stanza, two of the lines altered but a breve, a shade, a hint, from the other two—all these tonal effects strike upon the ear like the fall and echo of far, faint, murmuring waters in some reverberating granite canyon of the Sierras.

It is commonly thought that Poe's poetry is never touched by moral passion; yet "Ulalume"

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and "The Haunted Palace" are denials of this tradition. In them we find the poet grafted upon the preacher; but the sermons are strictly subordinated to the austere demands of art.

Poe's range is narrow, his themes are few. Love, Beauty and Death—these are the springs of his inspiration. From all his finer verses break out again and again the sense of the irreparable and the cry of the Nevermore. Piercing sweet are they at times, and wild with all regret and unforgettable while graves and memories are the heritage of man.

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THE WORKS
OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION

[Published in *Graham's Magazine*, April, 1846.]

CHARLES DICKENS, in a note now lying before me, alluding to an examination I once made of the mechanism of "Barnaby Rudge," says—"By the way, are you aware that Godwin wrote his 'Caleb Williams' backwards? He first involved his hero in a web of difficulties, forming the second volume, and then, for the first, cast about him for some mode of accounting for what had been done."

I cannot think this the *precise* mode of procedure on the part of Godwin—and indeed what he himself acknowledges, is not altogether in accordance with Mr. Dickens' idea—but the author of "Caleb Williams" was too good an artist not to perceive the advantage derivable from at least a somewhat similar process. Nothing is more clear than that every plot, worth the name, must be elaborated to its *dénouement* before any thing be attempted with the pen. It is only with the *dénouement* constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially

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the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention.

There is a radical error, I think, in the usual mode of constructing a story. Either history affords a thesis—or one is suggested by an incident of the day—or, at best, the author sets himself to work in the combination of striking events to form merely the basis of his narrative—designing, generally, to fill in with description, dialogue, or autorial comment, whatever crevices of fact, or action, may, from page to page, render themselves apparent.

I prefer commencing with the consideration of an *effect*. Keeping originality *always* in view—for he is false to himself who ventures to dispense with so obvious and so easily attainable a source of interest—I say to myself, in the first place, "Of the innumerable effects, or impressions, of which the heart, the intellect, or (more generally) the soul is susceptible, what one shall I, on the present occasion, select?" Having chosen a novel, first, and secondly a vivid effect, I consider whether it can be best wrought by incident or tone—whether by ordinary incidents and peculiar tone, or the converse, or by peculiarity both of incident and tone—afterward looking about me (or rather within) for such combinations of event, or tone, as shall best aid me in the construction of the effect.

I have often thought how interesting a magazine paper might be written by any author who would—that it to say, who could—detail, step by step, the processes by which any one of his com-

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positions attained its ultimate point of completion. Why such a paper has never been given to the world, I am much at a loss to say—but, perhaps, the autorial vanity has had more to do with the omission than any one other cause. Most writers—poets in especial—prefer having it understood that they compose by a species of fine frenzy—an ecstatic intuition—and would positively shudder at letting the public take a peep behind the scenes, at the elaborate and vacillating crudities of thought—at the true purposes seized only at the last moment—at the innumerable glimpses of idea that arrived not at the maturity of full view—at the fully matured fancies discarded in despair as unmanageable—at the cautious selections and rejections—at the painful erasures and interpolations—in a word, at the wheels and pinions—the tackle for scene-shifting—the step-ladders and demon-traps— the cock's feathers, the red paint and the black patches, which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, constitute the proprieties of the literary *histrio*.

I am aware, on the other hand, that the case is by no means common, in which an author is at all in condition to retrace the steps by which his conclusions have been attained. In general, suggestions, having arisen pell-mell, are pursued and forgotten in a similar manner.

For my own part, I have neither sympathy with the repugnance alluded to, nor, at any time, the least difficulty in recalling to mind the progressive steps of any of my compositions; and, since the interest of an analysis, or reconstruc-

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tion, such as I have considered a *desideratum*, is quite independent of any real or fancied interest in the thing analyzed, it will not be regarded as a breach of decorum on my part to show the *modus operandi* by which some one of my own works was put together. I select "The Raven" as most generally known. It is my design to render it manifest that no one point in its composition is referible either to accident or intuition—that the work proceeded, step by step, to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem.

Let us dismiss, as irrelevant to the poem, *per se*, the circumstance—or say the necessity—which, in the first place, gave rise to the intention of comprising *a* poem that should suit at once the popular and the critical taste.

We commence, then, with this intention.

The initial consideration was that of extent. If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression—for, if two sittings be required, the affairs of the world interfere, and every thing like totality is at once destroyed. But since, *ceteris paribus*, no poet can afford to dispense with *any thing* that may advance his design, it but remains to be seen whether there is, in extent, any advantage to counterbalance the loss of unity which attends it. Here I say no, at once. What we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones—that is to say, of brief poetical effects. It is needless to demon-

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strate that a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychal necessity, brief. For this reason, at least one half of the "Paradise Lost" is essentially prose—a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions—the whole being deprived, through the extremeness of its length, of the vastly important artistic element, totality, or unity, of effect.

It appears evident, then, that there it a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art—the limit of a single sitting—and that, although in certain classes of prose composition, such as "Robinson Crusoe," (demanding no unity,) this limit may be advantageously overpassed, it can never properly be overpassed in a poem. Within this limit, the extent of a poem may be made to bear mathematical relation to its merit—in other words, to the excitement or elevation—again, in other words, to the degree of the true poetical effect which it is capable of inducing; for it is clear that the brevity must be in direct ratio of the intensity of the intended effect:—this, with one proviso—that a certain degree of duration is absolutely requisite for the production of any effect at all.

Holding in view these considerations, as well as that degree of excitement which I deemed not above the popular, while not below the critical, taste, I reached at once what I conceived the proper *length* for my intended poem—a length

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of about one hundred lines. It is, in fact, a hundred and eight.

My next thought concerned the choice of an impression, or effect, to be conveyed: and here I may as well observe that, throughout the construction, I kept steadily in view the design of rendering the work *universally* appreciable. I should be carried too far out of my immediate topic were I to demonstrate a point upon which I have repeatedly insisted, and which, with the poetical, stands not in the slightest need of demonstration—the point, I mean, that Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem. A few words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent. That pleasure which is at once the most intense, the most elevating, and the most pure, is, I believe, found in the contemplation of the beautiful. When, indeed, men speak of Beauty, they mean, precisely, not a quality, as is supposed, but an effect—they refer, in short, just to that intense and pure elevation of *soul*—*not* of intellect, or of heart—upon which I have commented, and which is experienced in consequence of contemplating "the beautiful." Now I designate Beauty as the province of the poem, merely because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring from direct causes—that objects should be attained through means best adapted for their attainment—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation alluded to, is *most readily* attained in the poem. Now the object, Truth, or

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the satisfaction of the intellect, and the object Passion, or the excitement of the heart, are, although attainable, to a certain extent, in poetry, far more readily attainable in prose. Truth, in fact, demands a precision, and Passion a *homeliness* (the truly passionate will comprehend me) which are absolutely antagonistic to that Beauty which, I maintain, is the excitement, or pleasurable elevation, of the soul. It by no means follows from any thing here said, that passion, or even truth, may not be introduced, and even profitably introduced, into a poem—for they may serve in elucidation, or aid the general effect, as do discords in music, by contrast—but the true artist will always contrive, first, to tone them into proper subservience to the predominant aim, and, secondly, to enveil them, as far as possible, in that Beauty which is the atmosphere and the essence of the poem.

Regarding, then, Beauty as my province, my next question referred to the *tone* of its highest manifestation—and all experience has shown that this tone is one of *sadness*. Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones.

The length, the province, and the tone, being thus determined, I betook myself to ordinary induction, with the view of obtaining some artistic piquancy which might serve me as a key-note in the construction of the poem—some pivot upon which the whole structure might turn. In care-

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fully thinking over all the usual artistic effects—or more properly *points,* in the theatrical sense—I did not fail to perceive immediately that no one had been so universally employed as that of the *refrain.* The universality of its employment sufficed to assure me of its intrinsic value, and spared me the necessity of submitting it to analysis. I considered it, however, with regard to its susceptibility of improvement, and soon saw it to be in a primitive condition. As commonly used, the *refrain,* or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone—both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity—of repetition. I resolved to diversify and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought: that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects, by the variation *of the application* of the *refrain*—the *refrain* itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

These points being settled, I next bethought me of the *nature* of my *refrain.* Since its application was to be repeatedly varied, it was clear that the *refrain* itself must be brief, for there would have been an insurmountable difficulty in frequent variations of application in any sentence of length. In proportion to the brevity of the sentence, would, of course, be the facility of the variation. This led me at once to a single word as the best *refrain.*

The question now arose as to the *character* of

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the word. Having made up my mind to a *refrain*, the division of the poem into stanzas, was, of course, a corollary: the *refrain* forming the close to each stanza. That such a close, to have force, must be sonorous and susceptible of protracted emphasis, admitted no doubt: and these considerations inevitably led me to the long *o* as the most sonorous vowel, in connection with *r* as the most producible consonant.

The sound of the *refrain* being thus determined, it became necessary to select a word embodying this sound, and at the same time in the fullest possible keeping with that melancholy which I had predetermined as the tone of the poem. In such a search it would have been absolutely impossible to overlook the word "Nevermore." In fact, it was the very first which presented itself.

The next *desideratum* was a pretext for the continuous use of the one word "nevermore." In observing the difficulty which I at once found in inventing a sufficiently plausible reason for its continuous repetition, I did not fail to perceive that this difficulty arose solely from the preassumption that the word was to be so continuously or monotonously spoken by *a human* being —I did not fail to perceive, in short, that the difficulty lay in the reconciliation of this monotony with the exercise of reason on the part of the creature repeating the word. Here, then, immediately arose the idea of a *non*-reasoning creature capable of speech; and, very naturally, a

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parrot, in the first instance, suggested itself, but was superseded forthwith by a Raven, as equally capable of speech, and infinitely more in keeping with the intended *tone*.

I had now gone so far as the conception of a Raven—the bird of ill omen—monotonously repeating the one word, "Nevermore," at the conclusion of each stanza, in a poem of melancholy tone, and in length about one hundred lines. Now, never losing sight of the object *supremeness*, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself—"Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the *universal* understanding of mankind, is the *most* melancholy?" Death—was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is the most melancholy of topics most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here, also, is obvious—"When it most closely allies itself to *Beauty:* the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world—and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover."

I had now to combine the two ideas, of a lover lamenting his deceased mistress and a Raven continuously repeating the word "Nevermore."—I had to combine these, bearing in mind my design of varying, at every turn, the *application* of the word repeated; but the only intelligible mode of such combination is that of imagining the Raven employing the word in answer to the queries of the lover. And here it was that I

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saw at once the opportunity afforded for the effect on which I had been depending—that is to say, the effect of the *variation of application.* I saw that I could make the first query propounded by the lover—the first query to which the Raven should reply "Nevermore"—that I could make this first query a commonplace one—the second less so—the third still less, and so on—until at length the lover, startled from his original *nonchalance* by the melancholy character of the word itself—by its frequent repetition—and by a consideration of the ominous reputation of the fowl that uttered it—is at length excited to superstition, and wildly propounds queries of a far different character—queries whose solution he has passionately at heart—propounds them half in superstition and half in that species of despair which delights in self-torture—propounds them not altogether because he believes in the prophetic or demoniac character of the bird (which, reason assured him, is merely repeating a lesson learned by rote) but because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modeling his questions as to receive from the *expected* "Nevermore" the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrow. Perceiving the opportunity thus afforded me—or, more strictly, thus forced upon me in the progress of the construction—I first established in mind the climax, or concluding query —that query to which "Nevermore" should be in the last place an answer—that query in reply to which this word "Nevermore" should involve

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the utmost conceivable amount of sorrow and despair.

Here then the poem may be said to have its beginning—at the end, where all works of art should begin—for it was here, at this point of my preconsiderations, that I first put pen to paper in the composition of the stanza:

"Prophet," said I, "thing of evil! prophet still if bird or devil!
By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore,
Tell this soul with sorrow laden, if within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

I composed this stanza, at this point, first that, by establishing the climax, I might the better vary and graduate, as regards seriousness and importance, the preceding queries of the lover —and, secondly, that I might definitely settle the rhythm, the metre, and the length and general arrangement of the stanza—as well as graduate the stanzas which were to precede, so that none of them might surpass this in rhythmical effect. Had I been able, in the subsequent composition, to construct more vigorous stanzas, I should, without scruple, have purposely enfeebled them, so as not to interfere with the climacteric effect.

And here I may as well say a few words of the versification. My first object (as usual) was originality. The extent to which this has been neglected, in versification, is one of the most un-

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accountable things in the world. Admitting that there is little possibility of variety in mere *rhythm*, it is still clear that the possible varieties of metre and stanza are absolutely infinite—and yet, *for centuries, no man, in verse, has ever done, or ever seemed to think of doing, an original thing.* The fact is, that originality (unless in minds of very unusual force) is by no means a matter, as some suppose, of impulse or intuition. In general, to be found, it must be elaborately sought, and although a positive merit of the highest class, demands in its attainment less of invention than negation.

Of course, I pretend to no originality in either the rhythm or metre of the "Raven." The former is trochaic— the latter is octameter acatalectic, alternating with heptameter catalectic repeated in the *refrain* of the fifth verse, and terminating with tetrameter catalectic. Less pedantically—the feet employed throughout (troches) consist of a long syllable followed by a short: the first line of the stanza consists of eight of these feet—the second of seven and a half (in effect two-thirds)—the third of eight—the fourth of seven and a half—the fifth the same—the sixth three and a half. Now, each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before, and what originality the "Raven" has, is in their *combination into stanza;* nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual, and some al-

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together novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.

The next point to be considered was the mode of bringing together the lover and the Raven—and the first branch of this consideration was the *locale*. For this the most natural suggestion might seem to be a forest, or the fields—but it has always appeared to me that a close *circumscription of space* is absolutely necessary to the effect of insulated incident:—it has the force of a frame to a picture. It has an indisputable moral power in keeping concentrated the attention, and, of course, must not be confounded with mere unity of place.

I determined, then, to place the lover in his chamber—in a chamber rendered sacred to him by memories of her who had frequented it. The room is represented as richly furnished—this in mere pursuance of the ideas I have already explained on the subject of Beauty, as the sole true poetical thesis.

The *locale* being thus determined, I had now to introduce the bird—and the thought of introducing him through the window, was inevitable. The idea of making the lover suppose, in the first instance, that the flapping of the wings of the bird against the shutter, is a "tapping" at the door, originated in a wish to increase, by prolonging, the reader's curiosity, and in a desire to admit the incidental effect arising from the lover's throwing open the door, finding all

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dark, and thence adopting the half-fancy that it was the spirit of his mistress that knocked.

I made the night tempestuous, first, to account for the Raven's seeking admission, and secondly, for the effect of contrast with the (physical) serenity within the chamber.

I made the bird alight on the bust of Pallas, also for the effect of contrast between the marble and the plumage—it being understood that the bust was absolutely *suggested* by the bird—the bust of *Pallas* being chosen, first, as most in keeping with the scholarship of the lover, and, secondly, for the sonorousness of the word, Pallas, itself.

About the middle of the poem, also, I have availed myself of the force of contrast, with a view of deepening the ultimate impression. For example, an air of the fantastic—approaching as nearly to the ludicrous as was admissible—is given to the Raven's entrance. He comes in "with many a flirt and flutter."

Not the *least obeisance made* he—not a moment stopped or stayed he,
But with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door.

In the two stanzas which follow, the design is more obviously carried out:—

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the *grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,*
"Though thy *crest be shorn and shaven* thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore?"
Quoth the raven "Nevermore."

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Much I marvelled *this ungainly fowl* to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

The effect of the *dénouement* being thus provided for, I immediately drop the fantastic for a tone of the most profound seriousness:—this tone commencing in the stanza directly following the one last quoted, with the line,

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only, etc.

From this epoch the lover no longer jests—no longer sees any thing even of the fantastic in the Raven's demeanor. He speaks of him as a "grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore," and feels the "fiery eyes" burning into his "bosom's core." This revolution of thought, or fancy, on the lover's part, is intended to induce a similar one on the part of the reader —to bring the mind into a proper frame for the *dénouement*—which is now brought about as rapidly and as *directly* as possible.

With the *dénouement* proper—with the Raven's reply, "Nevermore," to the lover's final demand if he shall meet his mistress in another world—the poem, in its obvious phase, that of a simple narrative, may be said to have its completion. So far, every thing is within the limits of the accountable—of the real. A raven, having learned by rote the single word "Never-

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more," and having escaped from the custody of its owner, is driven at midnight, through the violence of a storm, to seek admission at a window from which a light still gleams—the chamber-window of a student, occupied half in poring over a volume, half in dreaming of a beloved mistress deceased. The casement being thrown open at the fluttering of the bird's wings, the bird itself perches on the most convenient seat out of the immediate reach of the student, who, amused by the incident and the oddity of the visitor's demeanor, demands of it, in jest and without looking for a reply, its name. The raven addressed, answers with its customary word, "Nevermore"—a word which finds immediate echo in the melancholy heart of the student, who, giving utterance aloud to certain thoughts suggested by the occasion, is again startled by the fowl's repetition of "Nevermore." The student now guesses the state of the case, but is impelled, as I have before explained, by the human thirst for self-torture, and in part by superstition, to propound such queries to the bird as will bring him, the lover, the most of the luxury of sorrow, through the anticipated answer "Nevermore." With the indulgence to the extreme, of this self-torture, the narration, in what I have termed its first or obvious phase, has a natural termination, and so far there has been no overstepping of the limits of the real.

But in subjects so handled, however skilfully, or with however vivid an array of incident, there is always a certain hardness or nakedness, which

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repels the artistical eye. Two things are invariably required—first, some amount of complexity, or more properly, adaptation; and, secondly, some amount of suggestiveness—some under current, however indefinite, of meaning. It is this latter, in especial, which imparts to a work of art so much of that *richness* (to borrow from colloquy a forcible term) which we are too fond of confounding with *the ideal.* It is the *excess* of the suggested meaning—it is the rendering this the upper instead of the under current of the theme—which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so called poetry of the so called transcendentalists.

Holding these opinions, I added the two concluding stanzas of the poem—their suggestiveness being thus made to pervade all the narrative which has preceded them. The under-current of meaning is rendered first apparent in the lines—

> "Take thy beak from out *my heart,* and take thy form from off my door!"
> Quoth the Raven "Nevermore!"

It will be observed that the words, "from out my heart," involve the first metaphorical expression in the poem. They, with the answer, "Nevermore," dispose the mind to seek a moral in all that has been previously narrated. The reader begins now to regard the Raven as emblematical—but it is not until the very last line of the very last stanza, that the intention of mak-

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ing him emblematical of *Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance* is permitted distinctly to be seen:

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul *from out that shadow* that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore.

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THE POETIC PRINCIPLE*

[In *Sartain's Union Magazine*, October, 1850.]

In speaking of the Poetic Principle, I have no design to be either thorough or profound. While discussing very much at random the essentiality of what we call Poetry, my principal purpose will be to cite for consideration some few of those minor English or American poems which best suit my own taste, or which, upon my own fancy, have left the most definite impression. By "minor poems" I mean, of course, poems of little length. And here, in the beginning, permit me to say a few words in regard to a somewhat peculiar principle, which, whether rightfully or wrongfully, has always had its influence in my own critical estimate of the poem. I hold that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase, "a long poem," is simply a flat contradiction in terms.

I need scarcely observe that a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul. The value of the poem is in the ratio

* See also "The Rationale of Verse," vol. x., present edition.—EDITOR.

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of this elevating excitement. But all excitements are, through a psychal necessity, transient. That degree of excitement which would entitle a poem to be so called at all, cannot be sustained throughout a composition of any great length. After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags—fails—a revulsion ensues—and then the poem is, in effect, and in fact, no longer such.

There are, no doubt, many who have found difficulty in reconciling the critical dictum that the "Paradise Lost" is to be devoutly admired throughout, with the absolute impossibility of maintaining for it, during perusal, the amount of enthusiasm which that critical dictum would demand. This great work, in fact, is to be regarded as poetical only when, losing sight of that vital requisite in all works of Art, Unity, we view it merely as a series of minor poems. If, to preserve its Unity—its totality of effect or impression—we read it (as would be necessary) at a single sitting, the result is but a constant alternation of excitement and depression. After a passage of what we feel to be true poetry, there follows, inevitably, a passage of platitude which no critical pre-judgment can force us to admire; but if, upon completing the work, we read it again; omitting the first book—that is to say, commencing with the second—we shall be surprised at now finding that admirable which we before condemned—that damnable which we had previously so much admired. It follows from all this that the ultimate aggregate, or absolute

fect of even the best epic under the sun, is a nullity—and this is precisely the fact.

In regard to the Iliad, we have, if not positive proof, at least very good reason, for believing it intended as a series of lyrics; but, granting the epic intention, I can say only that the work is based in an imperfect sense of Art. The modern epic is, of the suppositious ancient model, but an inconsiderate and blind-fold imitation. But the day of these artistic anomalies is over. If, at any time, any very long poem *were* popular in reality—which I doubt—it is at least clear that no very long poem will ever be popular again.

That the extent of a poetical work is, *ceteris paribus*, the measure of its merit, seems undoubtedly, when we thus state it, a proposition sufficiently absurd—yet we are indebted for it to the Quarterly Reviews. Surely there can be nothing in mere *size*, abstractly considered—there can be nothing in mere *bulk*, so far as a volume is concerned, which has so continuously elicited admiration from these saturnine pamphlets! A mountain, to be sure, by the mere sentiment of physical magnitude which it conveys, *does* impress us with a sense of the sublime—but no man is impressed after *this* fashion by the material grandeur of even "The Columbiad." Even the Quarterlies have not instructed us to be so impressed by it. *As yet*, they have not *insisted* on our estimating Lamartine by the cubic foot, or Pollock by the pound—but what else are we to *infer* from their continual prating about "sus-

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tained effort"? If, by "sustained effort," any little gentleman has accomplished an epic, let us frankly commend him for the effort—if this indeed be a thing commendable—but let us forbear praising the epic on the effort's account. It is to be hoped that common sense, in the time to come, will prefer deciding upon a work of Art rather by the impression it makes—by the effect it produces—than by the time it took to impress the effect, or by the amount of "sustained effort" which had been found necessary in effecting the impression. The fact is, that perseverance is one thing and genius quite another—nor can all the Quarterlies in Christendom confound them. By the by, this proposition, with many which I have been just urging, will be received as self-evident. In the meantime, by being generally condemned as falsities, they will not be essentially damaged as truths.

On the other hand, it is clear that a poem may be improperly brief. Undue brevity degenerates into mere epigrammatism. A *very* short poem, while now and then producing a brilliant or vivid, never produces a profound or enduring effect. There must be the steady pressing down of the stamp upon the wax. De Béranger has wrought innumerable things, pungent and spirit-stirring, but in general they have been too imponderous to stamp themselves deeply into the public attention, and thus, as so many feathers of fancy, have been blown aloft only to be whistled down the wind.

A remarkable instance of the effect of undue

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brevity in depressing a poem, in keeping it out of the popular view, is afforded by the following exquisite little Serenade—

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright.
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how?—
To thy chamber-window, sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark the silent stream—
The champak odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
O, beloved as thou art!

O, lift me from the grass!
I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast:
O, press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last!

Very few perhaps are familiar with these lines, yet no less a poet than Shelley is their author. Their warm, yet delicate and ethereal imagination will be appreciated by all, but by none so thoroughly as by him who has himself arisen from sweet dreams of one beloved to bathe in the aromatic air of a southern mid-summer night.

One of the finest poems by Willis, the very

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best in my opinion which he has ever written, has no doubt, through this same defect of undue brevity, been kept back from its proper position, not less in the critical than in the popular view:—

The shadows lay along Broadway,
'Twas near the twilight-tide—
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride.
Alone walk'd she; but, viewlessly,
Walk'd spirits at her side.

Peace charm'd the street beneath her feet,
And Honour charm'd the air;
And all astir looked kind on her,
And called her good as fair—
For all God ever gave to her
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare
From lovers warm and true—
For heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo—
But honour'd well her charms to sell,
If priests the selling do.

Now walking there was one more fair—
A slight girl, lily-pale;
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail—
'Twixt Want and Scorn she walk'd forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
From this world's peace to pray,
For as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way!—
But the sin forgiven by Christ in Heaven.
By man is cursed alway!

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In this composition we find it difficult to recognise the Willis who has written so many mere "verses of society." The lines are not only richly ideal but full of energy, while they breathe an earnestness, an evident sincerity of sentiment, for which we look in vain throughout all the other works of this author.

While the epic mania, while the idea that to merit in poetry prolixity is indispensable, has for some years past been gradually dying out of the public mind, by mere dint of its own absurdity, we find it succeeded by a heresy too palpably false to be long tolerated, but one which, in the brief period it has already endured, may be said to have accomplished more in the corruption of our Poetical Literature than all its other enemies combined. I allude to the heresy of *The Didactic*. It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all Poetry is Truth. Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral, and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. We Americans especially have patronized this happy idea, and we Bostonians very especially have developed it in full. We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting in the true poetic dignity and force:—but the simple fact is that would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists nor *can* exist any

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work more thoroughly dignified, more supremely noble, than this very poem, this poem *per se*, this poem which is a poem and nothing more, this poem written solely for the poem's sake.

With as deep a reverence for the True as ever inspired the bosom of man, I would nevertheless limit, in some measure, its modes of inculcation. I would limit to enforce them. I would not enfeeble them by dissipation. The demands of Truth are severe. She has no sympathy with the myrtles. All *that* which is so indispensable in Song is precisely all *that* with which *she* has nothing whatever to do. It is but making her a flaunting paradox to wreathe her in gems and flowers. In enforcing a truth we need severity rather than efflorescence of language. We must be simple, precise, terse. We must be cool, calm, unimpassioned. In a word, we must be in that mood which, as nearly as possible, is the exact converse of the poetical. *He* must be blind indeed who does not perceive the radical and chasmal difference between the truthful and the poetical modes of inculcation. He must be theory-mad beyond redemption who, in spite of these differences, shall still persist in attempting to reconcile the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and Truth.

Dividing the world of mind into its three most immediately obvious distinctions, we have the Pure Intellect, Taste, and the Moral Sense. I place Taste in the middle because it is just this position which in the mind it occupies. It holds intimate relations with either extreme; but from

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the Moral Sense is separated by so faint a difference that Aristotle has not hesitated to place some of its operations among the virtues themselves. Nevertheless we find the *offices* of the trio marked with a sufficient distinction. Just as the Intellect concerns itself with Truth, so Taste informs us of the Beautiful, while the Moral Sense is regardful of Duty. Of this latter, while Conscience teaches the obligation, and Reason the expediency, Taste contents herself with displaying the charms, waging war upon Vice solely on the ground of her deformity, her disproportion, her animosity to the fitting, to the appropriate, to the harmonious, in a word, to Beauty.

An immortal instinct deep within the spirit of man is thus plainly a sense of the beautiful. This it is which administers to his delight in the manifold forms, and sounds, and odors, and sentiments amid which he exists. And just as the lily is repeated in the lake, or the eyes of Amaryllis in the mirror, so is the mere oral or written repetition of these forms, and sounds, and colors, and odors, and sentiments a duplicate source of delight. But this mere repetition is not poetry. He who shall simply sing, with however glowing enthusiasm, or with however vivid a truth of description, of the sights, and sounds, and odors, and colors, and sentiments which greet *him* in common with all mankind—he, I say, has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still a something in the distance which he has been unable to attain. We have still a

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thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. This thirst belongs to the immortality of Man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is no mere appreciation of the Beauty before us, but a wild effort to reach the Beauty above. Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of Time to attain a portion of that Loveliness whose very elements perhaps appertain to eternity alone. And thus when by Poetry, or when by Music, the most entrancing of the poetic moods, we find ourselves melted into tears, we weep then, not as the Abbate Gravina supposes, through excess of pleasure, but through a certain petulant, impatient sorrow at our inability to grasp *now*, wholly, here on earth, at once and for ever, those divine and rapturous joys of which *through* the poem, or *through* the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses.

The struggle to apprehend the supernal Loveliness—this struggle, on the part of souls fittingly constituted—has given to the world all *that* which it (the world) has ever been enabled at once to understand and *to feel* as poetic.

The Poetic Sentiment, of course, may develop itself in various modes—in Painting, in Sculpture, in Architecture, in the Dance—very especially in Music—and very peculiarly, and with a wide field, in the composition of the Landscape

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Garden. Our present theme, however, has regard only to its manifestation in words. And here let me speak briefly on the topic of rhythm. Contenting myself with the certainty that Music, in its various modes of metre, rhythm, and rhyme, is of so vast a moment in Poetry as never to be wisely rejected—is so vitally important an adjunct, that he is simply silly who declines its assistance, I will not now pause to maintain its absolute essentiality. It is in Music perhaps that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment, it struggles—the creation of supernal Beauty. It *may* be, indeed, that here this sublime end is, now and then, attained in *fact*. We are often made to feel, with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp are stricken notes which *cannot* have been unfamiliar to the angels. And thus there can be little doubt that in the union of Poetry with Music in its popular sense, we shall find the widest field for the Poetic development. The old Bards and Minnesingers had advantages which we do not possess—and Thomas Moore, singing his own songs, was, in the most legitimate manner, perfecting them as poems.

To recapitulate then:—I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as *The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth.

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A few words, however, in explanation. *That* pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation, or excitement *of the soul*, which we recognise as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the heart. I make Beauty, therefore—using the word as inclusive of the sublime—I make Beauty the province of the poem, simply because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring as directly as possible from their causes:—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation in question is at least *most readily* attainable in the poem. It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion, or the precepts of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth, may not be introduced into a poem, and with advantage; for they may subserve incidentally, in various ways, the general purposes of the work: but the true artist will always contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that *Beauty* which is the atmosphere and the real essence of the poem.

I cannot better introduce the few poems which I shall present for your consideration, than by the citation of the Proem to Longfellow's "Waif:"—

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The day is done, and the darkness
  Falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward
  From an Eagle in its flight.

I see the lights of the village
  Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me,
  That my soul cannot resist;

A feeling of sadness and longing,
  That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
  As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
  Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
  And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
  Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
  Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,
  Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
  And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
  Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
  Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who through long days of labor,
  And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
  Of wonderful melodies.

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Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

With no great range of imagination, these lines have been justly admired for their delicacy of expression. Some of the images are very effective. Nothing can be better than—

——————the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Down the corridors of Time.*

The idea of the last quatrain is also very effective. The poem on the whole, however, is chiefly to be admired for the graceful *insouciance* of its metre, so well in accordance with the character of the sentiments, and especially for the *ease* of the general manner. This "ease" or naturalness, in a literary style, it has long been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone—as a point of really difficult attainment. But not so: —a natural manner is difficult only to him who

*Poe's quotation.—EDITOR.

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should never meddle with it—to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the instinct, that *the tone*, in composition, should always be that which the mass of mankind would adopt—and must perpetually vary, of course, with the occasion. The author who, after the fashion of *The North American Review*, should be upon *all* occasions merely "quiet," must necessarily upon *many* occasions be simply silly, or stupid; and has no more right to be considered "easy" or "natural" than a Cockney exquisite, or than the sleeping Beauty in the waxworks.

Among the minor poems of Bryant, none has so much impressed me as the one which he entitles "June." I quote only a portion of it:—

There, through the long, summer hours,
The golden light should lie,
And thick young herbs and groups of flowers
Stand in their beauty by.
The oriole should build and tell
His love-tale, close beside my cell;
The idle butterfly
Should rest him there, and there be heard
The housewife-bee and humming bird.

And what if cheerful shouts, at noon,
Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon,
With fairy laughter blent?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothéd lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

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I know, I know, I should not see*
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me;
Nor its wild music flow;
But if, around my place of sleep,
The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go.
Soft airs and song, and light and bloom,
Should keep them lingering by my tomb.

These to their soften'd hearts should bear
The thoughts of what has been,
And speak of one who cannot share
The gladness of the scene;
Whose part, in all the pomp that fills
The circuit of the summer hills,
Is—that his grave is green;
And deeply would their hearts rejoice
To hear again his loving voice.

The rhythmical flow here is even voluptuous —nothing could be more melodious. The poem has always affected me in a remarkable manner. The intense melancholy which seems to well up, perforce, to the surface of all the poet's cheerful sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul—while there is the truest poetic elevation in the thrill. The impression left is one of a pleasurable sadness. And if, in the remaining compositions which I shall introduce to you, there be more or less of a similar tone always apparent, let me remind you that (how or why we know not) this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with all the

*Poe's quotation.—EDITOR.

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higher manifestations of true Beauty. It is, nevertheless,

> A feeling of sadness and longing
> That is not akin to pain,
> And resembles sorrow only
> As the mist resembles the rain.

The taint of which I speak is clearly perceptible even in a poem so full of brilliancy and spirit as "The Health" of Edward Coote Pinckney:—

> I fill this cup to one made up
> Of loveliness alone,
> A woman, of her gentle sex
> The seeming paragon;
> To whom the better elements
> And kindly stars have given
> A form so fair, that like the air,
> 'Tis less of earth than heaven.
>
> Her every tone is music's own,
> Like those of morning birds,
> And something more than melody
> Dwells ever in her words;
> The coinage of her heart are they,
> And from her lips each flows
> As one may see the burden'd bee
> Forth issue from the rose.
>
> Affections are as thoughts to her,
> The measures of her hours;
> Her feelings have the fragrancy,
> The freshness of young flowers;
> And lovely passions, changing oft,
> So fill her, she appears
> The image of themselves by turns,—
> The idol of past years!

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Of her bright face one glance will trace
A picture on the brain,
And of her voice in echoing hearts
A sound must long remain;
But memory, such as mine of her,
So very much endears,
When death is nigh, my latest sigh
Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon—
Her health! and would on earth there stood,
Some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry,
And weariness a name.

It was the misfortune of Mr. Pinckney to have been born too far south. Had he been a New Englander, it is probable that he would have been ranked as the chief of American lyrists by that magnanimous cabal which has so long controlled the destinies of American Letters, in conducting the thing called *The North American Review*. The poem just cited is especially beautiful; but the poetic elevation which it induces we must refer chiefly to our sympathy in the poet's enthusiasm. We pardon his hyperboles for the evident earnestness with which they are uttered.

It was by no means my design, however, to expatiate upon the *merits* of what I should read you. These will necessarily speak for themselves. Boccalini, in his *Advertisements from Parnassus*, tells us that Zoilus once presented

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Apollo a very caustic criticism upon a very admirable book:—whereupon the god asked him for the beauties of the work. He replied that he only busied himself about the errors. On hearing this, Apollo, handing him a sack of unwinnowed wheat, bade him pick out *all the chaff* for his reward.

Now this fable answers very well as a hit at the critics—but I am by no means sure that the god was in the right. I am by no means certain that the true limits of the critical duty are not grossly misunderstood. Excellence, in a poem especially, may be considered in the light of an axiom, which need only be properly *put*, to become self-evident. It is *not* excellence if it require to be demonstrated as such:—and thus to point out too particularly the merits of a work of Art, is to admit that they are *not* merits altogether.

Among the "Melodies" of Thomas Moore is one whose distinguished character as a poem proper seems to have been singularly left out of view. I allude to his lines beginning—"Come, rest in this bosom." The intense energy of their expression is not surpassed by anything in Byron. There are two of the lines in which a sentiment is conveyed that embodies the *all in all* of the divine passion of Love—a sentiment which, perhaps, has found its echo in more, and in more passionate human hearts than any other single sentiment ever embodied in words:—

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Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer,
Though the herd have fled from thee, thy home is still here;
Here still is the smile, that no cloud can o'ercast,
And a heart and a hand all thy own to the last.

Oh! what was love made for, if 'tis not the same
Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame?
I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart,
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

Thou hast call'd me thy Angel in moments of bliss,
And thy Angel I'll be 'mid the horrors of this,—
Through the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps to pursue,
And shield thee, and save thee,—or perish there too!

It has been the fashion of late days to deny Moore Imagination, while granting him Fancy—a distinction originating with Coleridge—than whom no man more fully comprehended the great powers of Moore. The fact is, that the fancy of this poet so far predominates over all his other faculties, and over the fancy of all other men, as to have induced, very naturally, the idea that he is fanciful *only*. But never was there a greater mistake. Never was a grosser wrong done the fame of a true poet. In the compass of the English language I can call to mind no poem more profoundly—more weirdly *imaginative*, in the best sense, than the lines commencing—"I would I were by that dim lake"—which are the composition of Thomas Moore. I regret that I am unable to remember them.

One of the noblest—and, speaking of Fancy—

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one of the most singularly fanciful of modern poets, was Thomas Hood. His "Fair Ines" had always for me an inexpressible charm:—

O saw ye not fair Ines?
  She's gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
  And rob the world of rest;
She took our daylight with her,
  The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
  And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines
  Before the fall of night,
For fear the moon should shine alone,
  And stars unrivall'd bright;
And blessed will the lover be
  That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
  I dare not even write!

Would I had been, fair Ines,
  That gallant cavalier,
Who rode so gaily by thy side,
  And whisper'd thee so near!
Were there no bonny dames at home,
  Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
  The dearest of the dear?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
  Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
  And banners waved before;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
  And snowy plumes they wore;
It would have been a beauteous dream,
  If it had been no more!

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Alas, alas, fair Ines,
She went away with song,
With music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng;
But some were sad and felt no mirth,
But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell,
To her you've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines,
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before,—
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blest one lover's heart
Has broken many more!

"The Haunted House," by the same author, is one of the truest poems ever written,—one of the *truest*, one of the most unexceptionable, one of the most thoroughly artistic, both in its theme and in its execution. It is, moreover, powerfully ideal—imaginative. I regret that its length renders it unsuitable for the purposes of this lecture. In place of it permit me to offer the universally appreciated "Bridge of Sighs:"—

One more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;—
Fashion'd so tenderly,
Young and so fair!

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Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now, is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful;
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily,
Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

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Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
Oh! it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly,
Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver:
But not the dark arch,
Or the back flowing river;
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it,—think of it,
Dissolute Man!
Lave in it, drink of it
Then, if you can!

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Take her up tenderly;
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!
Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently,—kindly,—
Smooth and compose them;
And her eyes, close them.
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest,—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!
Owning her weakness,
Her evil behavior,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Savior!

The vigor of this poem is no less remarkable than its pathos. The versification, although carrying the fanciful to the very verge of the fantastic, is nevertheless admirably adapted to the wild insanity which is the thesis of the poem.

Among the minor poems of Lord Byron is one which has never received from the critics the praise which it undoubtedly deserves:—

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Though the day of my destiny's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine;
And when winds are at war with the ocean,
As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shivered,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is delivered
To pain—it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me:
They may crush, but they shall not contemn—
They may torture, but shall not subdue me—
'Tis of *thee* that I think—not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,
Though slandered, thou never couldst shake,—
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
Though parted, it was not to fly,
Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me
Nor mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one—
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
'Twas folly not sooner to shun:

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And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perished,
Thus much I at least may recall,
It hath taught me that what I most cherished
Deserved to be dearest of all:
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

Although the rhythm here is one of the most difficult, the versification could scarcely be improved. No nobler *theme* ever engaged the pen of poet. It is the soul-elevating idea that no man can consider himself entitled to complain of Fate while in his adversity he still retains the unwavering love of woman.

From Alfred Tennyson, although in perfect sincerity I regard him as the noblest poet that ever lived, I have left myself time to cite only a very brief specimen. I call him, and *think* him the noblest of poets, *not* because the impressions he produces are at *all* times the most profound—*not* because the poetical excitement which he induces is at *all* times the most intense—but because it is at all times the most ethereal—in other words, the most elevating and most pure. No poet is so little of the earth, earthy. What I am about to read is from his last poem, "The Princess:"—

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Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

Thus, although in a very cursory and imperfect manner, I have endeavored to convey to you my conception of the Poetic Principle. It has been my purpose to suggest that, while this Principle itself is strictly and simply the Human Aspiration for Supernal Beauty, the manifestation of the Principle is always found in *an elevating excitement of the soul*, quite independent of that passion which is the intoxication of the Heart, or of that truth which is the satisfaction of the Reason. For in regard to passion, alas! its tendency is to degrade rather than to elevate the Soul. Love, on the contrary—Love—the true, the di-

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vine Eros—the Uranian as distinguished from the Dionæan Venus—is unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetical themes. And in regard to Truth, if, to be sure, through the attainment of a truth we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience at once the true poetical effect; but this effect is referable to the harmony alone, and not in the least degree to the truth which merely served to render the harmony manifest.

We shall reach, however, more immediately a distinct conception of what the true Poetry is by mere reference to a few of the simple elements which induce in the Poet himself the true poetical effect. He recognizes the ambrosia which nourishes his soul in the bright orbs that shine in Heaven, in the volutes of the flower, in the clustering of low shrubberies, in the waving of the grain-fields, in the slanting of tall eastern trees, in the blue distance of mountains, in the grouping of clouds, in the twinkling of half-hidden brooks, in the gleaming of silver rivers, in the repose of sequestered lakes, in the star-mirroring depths of lonely wells. He perceives it in the songs of birds, in the harp of Æolus, in the sighing of the night wind, in the repining voice of the forest, in the surf that complains to the shore, in the fresh breath of the woods, in the scent of the violent, in the voluptuous perfume of the hyacinth, in the suggestive odor that comes to him at even-tide from far-distant undiscovered islands, over dim oceans, illimitable and unexplored. He owns it in all noble thoughts, in all

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unworldly motives, in all holy impulses, in all chivalrous, generous, and self-sacrificing deeds. He feels it in the beauty of woman, in the grace of her step, in the lustre of her eye, in the melody of her voice, in her soft laughter, in her sigh, in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments, in her burning enthusiasms, in her gentle charities, in her meek and devotional endurances, but above all, ah, far above all, he kneels to it, he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty of her *love*.

Let me conclude by the recitation of yet another brief poem, one very different in character from any that I have before quoted. It is by Motherwell, and is called "The Song of the Cavalier." With our modern and altogether rational ideas of the absurdity and impiety of warfare, we are not precisely in that frame of mind best adapted to sympathize with the sentiments, and thus to appreciate the real excellence of the poem. To do this fully we must identify ourselves in fancy with the soul of the old cavalier:—

A steed! a steed! of matchless speede!
A sword of metal keene!
Al else to noble heartes is drosse—
Al else on earth is meane.
The neighynge of the war-horse prowde,
The rowleing of the drum,
The clangour of the trumpet lowde—
Be soundes from heaven that come.

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And oh! the thundering presse of knightes,
When as their war-cryes welle,
May tole from heaven an angel bright,
And rowse a fiend from hell.

Then mounte! then mounte, brave gallantes all,
And don your helmes amaine:
Deathe's couriers, Fame and Honour, call
Us to the field againe.
No shrewish teares shall fill your eye
When the sword-hilt's in our hand,—
Heart-whole we'll part, and no whit sighe
For the fayrest of the land;
Let piping swaine, and craven wight,
Thus weepe and puling crye,
Our business is like men to fight,
And hero-like to die!

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INTRODUCTION TO POEMS—1831*

LETTER TO MR. B——†

"WEST POINT, 1831.

"DEAR B—— . . . . . .

Believing only a portion of my former volume to be worthy a second edition—that small portion I thought it as well to include in the present book as to republish by itself. I have therefore herein combined 'Al Aaraaf' and 'Tamerlane' with other poems hitherto unprinted. Nor have I hesitated to insert from the 'Minor Poems,' now omitted, whole lines, and even passages, to the end that being placed in a fairer light, and the trash shaken from them in which they were imbedded, they may have some chance of being seen by posterity.

"It has been said that a good critique on a poem may be written by one who is no poet himself. This, according to *your* idea and *mine* of poetry, I feel to be false—the less poetical the critic, the less just the critique, and the converse. On this account, and because there are

*See page 156 present volume.—EDITOR.

†A fictitious personage.—EDITOR.

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but few B——s in the world, I would be as much ashamed of the world's good opinion as proud of your own. Another than yourself might here observe, 'Shakespeare is in possession of the world's good opinion, and yet Shakespeare is the greatest of poets. It appears then that the world judge correctly, why should you be ashamed of their favourable judgment?' The difficulty lies in the interpretation of the word 'judgment' or 'opinion.' The opinion is the world's, truly, but it may be called theirs as a man would call a book his, having bought it; he did not write the book, but it is his; they did not originate the opinion, but it is theirs. A fool, for example, thinks Shakespeare a great poet—yet the fool has never read Shakespeare. But the fool's neighbor, who is a step higher on the Andes of the mind, whose head (that is to say, his more exalted thought) is too far above the fool to be seen or understood, but whose feet (by which I mean his every-day actions) are sufficiently near to be discerned, and by means of which that superiority is ascertained, which *but* for them would never have been discovered—this neighbour asserts that Shakespeare is a great poet—the fool believes him, and it is henceforward his *opinion*. This neighbor's own opinion has, in like manner, been adopted from one above *him*, and so, ascendingly, to a few gifted individuals who kneel around the summit, beholding, face to face, the master spirit who stands upon the pinnacle. . . .

"You are aware of the great barrier in the

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path of an American writer. He is read, if at all, in preference to the combined and established wit of the world. I say established; for it is with literature as with law or empire—an established name is an estate in tenure, or a throne in possession. Besides, one might suppose that books, like their authors, improve by travel—their having crossed the sea is, with us, so great a distinction. Our antiquaries abandon time for distance; our very fops glance from the binding to the bottom of the title-page, where the mystic characters which spell London, Paris, or Genoa, are precisely so many letters of recommendation. . . .

"I mentioned just now a vulgar error as regards criticism. I think the notion that no poet can form a correct estimate of his own writings is another. I remarked before that in proportion to the poetical talent would be the justice of a critique upon poetry. Therefore a bad poet would, I grant, make a false critique, and his self-love would infallibly bias his little judgment in his favor; but a poet, who is indeed a poet, could not, I think, fail of making a just critique; whatever should be deducted on the score of self-love might be replaced on account of his intimate acquaintance with the subject; in short, we have more instances of false criticism than of just where one's own writings are the test, simply because we have more bad poets than good. There are, of course, many objections to what I say: Milton is a great example of the contrary; but his opinion with respect to the

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'Paradise Regained' is by no means fairly ascertained. By what trivial circumstances men are often led to assert what they do not really believe! Perhaps an inadvertent world has descended to posterity. But, in fact, the 'Paradise Regained' is little, if at all, inferior to the 'Paradise Lost,' and is only supposed so to be because men do not like epics, whatever they may say to the contrary, and reading those of Milton in their natural order, are too much wearied with the first to derive any pleasure from the second.

"I dare say Milton preferred 'Comus' to either—if so—justly. . . .

"As I am speaking of poetry, it will not be amiss to touch slightly upon the most singular heresy in its modern history—the heresy of what is called, very foolishly, the Lake School. Some years ago I might have been induced, by an occasion like the present, to attempt a formal refutation of their doctrine; at present it would be a work of supererogation. The wise must bow to the wisdom of such men as Coleridge and Southey, but being wise, have laughed at poetical theories so prosaically exemplified.

"Aristotle, with singular assurance, has declared poetry the most philosophical of all writings*—but it required a Wordsworth to pronounce it the most metaphysical. He seems to think that the end of poetry is, or should be, instruction; yet it is a truism that the end of our existence is happiness; if so, the end of every separate part of our existence, everything con-

* Σπουδαιότατον καὶ φιλοσοφώτατον γένος.

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nected with our existence, should be still happiness. Therefore the end of instruction should be happiness; and happiness is another name for pleasure;—therefore the end of instruction should be pleasure: yet we see the above-mentioned opinion implies precisely the reverse.

"To proceed: *ceteris paribus*, he who pleases is of more importance to his fellow-men than he who instructs, since utility is happiness, and pleasure is the end already obtained which instruction is merely the means of obtaining.

"I see no reason, then, why our metaphysical poets should plume themselves so much on the utility of their works, unless indeed they refer to instruction with eternity in view; in which case, sincere respect for their piety would not allow me to express contempt for their judgment; contempt which it would be difficult to conceal, since their writings are professedly to be understood by the few, and it is the many who stand in need of salvation. In such case I should no doubt be tempted to think of the devil in 'Melmoth,' who labors indefatigably, through three octavo volumes, to accomplish the destruction of one or two souls, while any common devil would have demolished one or two thousand.

"Against the subtleties which would make poetry a study—not a passion—it becomes the metaphysician to reason—but the poet to protest. Yet Wordsworth and Coleridge are men in years; the one imbued in contemplation from his childhood; the other a giant in intellect and learning. The diffidence, then, with which I ven-

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ture to dispute their authority would be overwhelming did I not feel, from the bottom of my heart, that learning has little to do with the imagination—intellect with the passions—or age with poetry.

"'Trifles, like straws, upon the surface flow;
He who would search for pearls must dive below,'

are lines which have done much mischief. As regards the greater truths, men oftener err by seeking them at the bottom than at the top; Truth lies in the huge abysses where wisdom is sought—not in the palpable palaces where she is found. The ancients were not always right in hiding the goddess in a well; witness the light which Bacon has thrown upon philosophy; witness the principles of our divine faith—that moral mechanism by which the simplicity of a child may overbalance the wisdom of a man.

"We see an instance of Coleridge's liability to err, in his *Biographia Literaria*—professedly his literary life and opinions, but, in fact, a treatise *de omni scibili et quibusdam aliis*. He goes wrong by reason of his very profundity, and of his error we have a natural type in the contemplation of a star. He who regards it directly and intensely sees, it is true, the star, but it is the star without a ray—while he who surveys it less inquisitively is conscious of all for which the star is useful to us below—its brilliancy and its beauty.

"As to Wordsworth, I have no faith in him.

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That he had in youth the feelings of a poet I believe—for there are glimpses of extreme delicacy in his writings—(and delicacy is the poet's own kingdom—his *El Dorado*)—but they have the appearance of a better day recollected; and glimpses, at best, are little evidence of present poetic fire; we know that a few straggling flowers spring up daily in the crevices of the glacier.

"He was to blame in wearing away his youth in contemplation with the end of poetizing in his manhood. With the increase of his judgment the light which should make it apparent has faded away. His judgment consequently is too correct. This may not be understood,—but the old Goths of Germany would have understood it, who used to debate matters of importance to their State twice, once when drunk, and once when sober—sober that they might not be deficient in formality—drunk lest they should be destitute of vigour.

"The long wordy discussions by which he tries to reason us into admiration of his poetry, speak very little in his favour: they are full of such assertions as this (I have opened one of his volumes at random)—'Of genius the only proof is the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before;'—indeed? then it follows that in doing what is *un*worthy to be done, or what *has* been done before, no genius can be evinced; yet the picking of pockets is an unworthy act, pockets have been picked time im-

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memorial, and Barrington, the pickpocket, in point of genius, would have thought hard of a comparison with William Wordsworth, the poet.

"Again, in estimating the merit of certain poems, whether they be Ossian's or Macpherson's can surely be of little consequence, yet, in order to prove their worthlessness, Mr. W. has expended many pages in the controversy. *Tantœne animis?* Can great minds descend to such absurdity? But worse still: that he may bear down every argument in favor of these poems, he triumphantly drags forward a passage, in his abomination with which he expects the reader to sympathise. It is the beginning of the epic poem 'Temora.' 'The blue waves of Ullin roll in light; the green hills are covered with day; trees shake their dusty heads in the breeze.' And this —this gorgeous, yet simple imagery, where all is alive and panting with immortality—this, William Wordsworth, the author of 'Peter Bell,' has *selected* for his contempt. We shall see what better he, in his own person, has to offer. Imprimis:

> "' And now she's at the pony's head,
> And now she's at the pony's tail,
> On that side now, and now on this;
> And, almost stifled with her bliss,
> A few sad tears does Betty shed. . . .
> She pats the pony, where or when
> She knows not . . . happy Betty Foy!
> Oh, Johnny, never mind the doctor!'

"Secondly:

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"'The dew was falling fast, the—stars began to blink;
I heard a voice: it said—"Drink, pretty creature, drink!"
And, looking o'er the hedge, be—fore me I espied
A snow-white mountain lamb, with a—maiden at its side.
No other sheep was near,—the lamb was all alone,
And by a slender cord was—tether'd to a stone.'

"Now, we have no doubt this is all true: we *will* believe it, indeed we will, Mr. W. Is it sympathy for the sheep you wish to excite? I love a sheep from the bottom of my heart.

"But there are occasions, dear B——, there are occasions when even Wordsworth is reasonable. Even Stamboul, it is said, shall have an end, and the most unlucky blunders must come to a conclusion. Here is an extract from his preface:—

"'Those who have been accumstomed to the phraseology of modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to a conclusion (*impossible!*) will, no doubt, have to struggle with feelings of awkwardness; (ha! ha! ha!) they will look round for poetry (ha! ha! ha! ha!), and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts have been permitted to assume that title.' Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

"Yet, let not Mr. W. despair; he has given immortality to a wagon, and the bee Sophocles has transmitted to eternity a sore toe, and dignified a tragedy with a chorus of turkeys.

"Of Coleridge, I cannot speak but with reverence. His towering intellect! his gigantic

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power! To use an author quoted by himself, *'Jai trouvé souvent que la plupart des sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas en ce qu'elles nient;'* and to employ his own language, he has imprisoned his own conceptions by the barrier he has erected against those of others. It is lamentable to think that such a mind should be buried in metaphysics, and, like the Nyctanthes, waste its perfume upon the night alone. In reading that man's poetry, I tremble like one who stands upon a volcano, conscious from the very darkness bursting from the crater, of the fire and the light that are weltering below.

"What is poetry?—Poetry! that Proteus-like idea, with as many appellations as the nine-titled Corcyra! 'Give me,' I demanded of a scholar some time ago, 'give me a definition of poetry.' '*Très-volontiers;*' and he proceeded to his library, brought me a Dr. Johnson, and overwhelmed me with a definition. Shade of the immortal Shakespeare! I imagine to myself the scowl of your spiritual eye upon the profanity of that scurrilous Ursa Major. Think of poetry, dear B——, think of poetry, and then think of Dr. Samuel Johnson! Think of all that is airy and fairy-like, and then of all that is hideous and unwieldy; think of his huge bulk, the Elephant! and then—and then think of the 'Tempest'—the 'Midsummer Night's Dream'—Prospero—Oberon—and Titania!

"A poem, in my opinion, is opposed to a work of science by having, for its *immediate* object,

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pleasure, not truth; to romance, by having, for its object, an *indefinite* instead of a *definite* pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is attained; romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with *in*definite sensations, to which end music is an *essential,* since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry; music, without the idea, is simply music; the idea, without the music, is prose, from its very definiteness.

"What was meant by the invective against him who had no music in his soul?

"To sum up this long rigmarole, I have, dear B——, what you, no doubt, perceive, for the metaphysical poets as poets, the most sovereign contempt. That they have followers proves nothing—

> "'No Indian prince has to his palace
> More followers than a thief to the gallows.'"

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POEMS

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DEDICATION

TO

THE NOBLEST OF HER SEX—

THE AUTHOR OF

"THE DRAMA OF EXILE"—

TO

MISS ELIZABETH BARRETT BARRETT

OF ENGLAND

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME

WITH THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC ADMIRATION AND WITH THE MOST SINCERE ESTEEM.

1845. E. A. P.

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PREFACE

THESE trifles are collected and republished chiefly with a view to their redemption from the many improvements to which they have been subjected while going at random the "rounds of the press." I am naturally anxious that what I have written should circulate as I wrote it, if it circulate at all. In defence of my own taste, nevertheless, it is incumbent upon me to say that I think nothing in this volume of much value to the public, or very creditable to myself. Events not to be controlled have prevented me from making, at any time, any serious effort in what, under happier circumstances, would have been the field of my choice. With me poetry has been not a purpose, but a passion; and the passions should be held in reverence: they must not—they cannot at will be excited, with an eye to the paltry compensations, or the more paltry commendations, of mankind.

1845. E. A. P.

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NOTE TO "THE RAVEN."*

"The Raven" was first published on the 29th of January, 1845, in the New York *Evening Mirror*—of which its author was then assistant editor. It was prefaced by the following words, understood to have been written by N. P. Willis:—"We are permitted to copy (in advance of publication) from the second number of the *American* [*Whig*] *Review*, the following remarkable poem by Edgar Poe. In our opinion, it is the most effective single example of 'fugitive poetry' ever published in this country, and unsurpassed in English poetry for subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative lift and 'pokerishness.' It is one of those 'dainties bred in a book' which we feed on. It will stick to the memory of everybody who reads it." In the February number of the *American Whig Review* the poem was published as by "Quarles," and it was introduced by the following note, evidently suggested if not written by Poe himself:

["The following lines from a correspondent—besides the deep, quaint strain of the sentiment, and the curious introduction of some ludicrous touches amidst the serious and impressive, as was doubtless intended by the author—appears to us one of the most felicitous specimens of unique rhyming which has for some time met our eye. The resources of English rhythm for varieties of melody, measure, and sound, producing corresponding diversities of effect, having been thoroughly studied, much more perceived, by very few poets in the language. While the classic tongues, especially the Greek, possess, by power of accent, several advantages for versification over our own, chiefly through greater abundance of spondaic feet, we have other and very great advantages of sound by the modern usage of rhyme. Alliteration is nearly the only effect of that kind which the ancients had in common with us. It will be seen that much of the melody of 'The Raven' arises from alliteration, and the studious use of similar sounds in unusual places. In regard to its measure, it may be noted that, if all the verses were like the second, they might properly be placed merely in short lines, producing a not uncommon form; but the presence in all the others of one line—mostly the second in the verse" [stanza?]—"which flows continuously, with only an aspirate pause in the middle, like that before the short line in the Sapphic Adonic, while the fifth has at the middle pause no similarity of sound with any part besides, gives the versification an entirely different effect. We could wish the capacities of our noble language in prosody were better understood."—ED. *American Whig Review.*]

*See also "The Philosophy of Composition," page 8, present volume.—EDITOR.

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THE RAVEN

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain

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Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
"'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping—tapping at my chamber door—
That I scarce was sure I heard you"—here I opened wide the door:——
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"
Merely this and nothing more.

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Back into the chamber turning, all my soul
within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping, somewhat louder
than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at
my window lattice;
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mys-
tery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment, and this mys-
tery explore;—
'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many
a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly
days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute
stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above
my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my
chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy
into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the counte-
nance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou,"
I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from
the Nightly shore—

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Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's
Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear
discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living
human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his
chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his
chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust,
spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word
he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather
then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other
friends have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes
have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly
spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only
stock and store,

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Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of 'Never—nevermore.' ''

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust, and door;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

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Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthé from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthé, and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—

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Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels
name Lenore."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or
fiend!" I shrieked, upstarting—
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's
Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy
soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust
above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy
form from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting,
still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my cham-
ber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's
that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws
his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies
floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

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NOTE TO "ULALUME."

"Ulalume" was first published in Colton's *American Review*, for December, 1847. On December 8, 1847, Poe wrote to N. P. Willis, editor of the *Home Journal*, as follows:

"I send you an *American* [*Whig*] *Review*—the number just issued—in which is a ballad by myself, but published anonymously. It is called 'Ulalume'—the page is turned down. I do not care to be known as its author just now; but would take it as a great favor if you would copy it in the *Home Journal*, with a word of inquiry as to who wrote it:—provided always that you think the poem worth the room it would occupy in your paper—a matter about which I am by no means sure."

Willis, accordingly, printed the poem with the following comment:

"We do not know how many readers we have who will enjoy, as we do, the following exquisitely piquant and skilful exercise of variety and niceness of language. It is a poem which we find in the *American Review*, full of beauty and oddity in sentiment and versification, but a curiosity (and a delicious one, we think) in philologic flavor. Who is the author?"

Naturally there were many who accredited the poem to Willis himself.

As printed in the *American Whig Review* and in the *Home Journal*, the poem contained the following stanza, which, at the suggestion of Mrs. S. Helen Whitman, Poe omitted from subsequent republications as of inferior quality to the other stanzas:

Said *we*, then, the two, then—"Ah, can it
  Have been that the woodlandish ghouls,
  The pitiful, the merciless ghouls—
To bar up our way and to ban it
  From the secret that lies in these wolds—
  From the thing that lies hidden in these wolds—
Had drawn up the spectre of a planet
  From the limbo of lunary souls,
This sinfully scintillant planet
  From the Hell of the planetary souls?"

—EDITOR.

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ULALUME

THE skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crisped and sere—
The leaves they were withering and sere;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir—
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
These were days when my heart was volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll—
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole—
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
But our thoughts they were palsied and sere—
Our memories were treacherous and sere—
For we knew not the month was October,

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And we marked not the night of the year—
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)
We noted not the dim lake of Auber—
(Though once we had journeyed down here)—
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
And star-dials pointed to morn—
As the sun-dials hinted of morn—
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—"She is warmer than Dian:
She rolls through an ether of sighs—
She revels in a region of sighs:
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion
To point us the path to the skies—
To the Lethean peace of the skies—
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said—"Sadly this star I mistrust—

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Her pallor I strangely mistrust:—
Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!
Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must."
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming:
Let us on by this tremulous light!
Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming
With Hope and in Beauty to-night:—
See!—it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright—
We safely may trust to a gleaming
That cannot but guide us aright,
Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom—
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of a vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said—"What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?"
She replied—"Ulalume—Ulalume—
'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

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Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crispéd and sere—
As the leaves that were withering and sere;
And I cried—"It was surely October
On *this* very night of last year
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—
That I brought a dread burden down here!
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
This misty mid region of Weir—
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,—
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

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THE BELLS*

I.

Hear the sledges with the bells—
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars, that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II.

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!

* The third and final draft of what was originally a very slight poem of seventeen lines. Published in its full form in the *Union Magazine* for October, 1849. Suggested by a friend, Mrs. M. A. Shew, to whom Poe in the first draft accredited authorship of the poem.—Editor.

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Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!—
From the molten golden-notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells,
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells
On the future! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III.

Hear the loud alarum bells—
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror now their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire
Leaping higher, higher, higher,

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With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now—now to sit or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
What a tale their terror tells
Of Despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
Of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV.

Hear the tolling of the bells—
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!

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For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.
And the people—ah, the people—
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,
And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone—
They are neither man nor woman—
They are neither brute nor human—
They are Ghouls:
And their king it is who tolls;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A pæan from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells—
Of the bells:
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells—
To the sobbing of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,
To the rolling of the bells—

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Of the bells, bells, bells—
To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

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TO HELEN*

I saw thee once—once only—years ago:
I must not say *how* many—but *not* many.
It was a July midnight; and from out
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,
Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven,
There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,
With quietude, and sultriness and slumber,
Upon the upturn'd faces of a thousand
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tiptoe—
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That gave out, in return for the love-light,
Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death—
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That smiled and died in this parterre, enchanted
By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
I saw thee half-reclining; while the moon
Fell on the upturn'd faces of the roses,
And on thine own, upturn'd—alas, in sorrow!

* "To Helen" (Mrs. S. Helen Whitman) was not published until November, 1848, although written several months earlier. It first appeared in the *Union Magazine*, and with the omission, contrary to the knowledge or desire of Poe, of the lines, "O Heaven! O God!—how my heart beats in coupling those two words!"—EDITOR.

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Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight—
Was it not Fate (whose name is also Sorrow),
That bade me pause before that garden-gate,
To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses?
No footstep stirred: the hated world all slept,
Save only thee and me—(O Heaven!—O God!
How my heart beats in coupling those two words!)—
Save only thee and me. I paused—I looked—
And in an instant all things disappeared.
(Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted!)
The pearly lustre of the moon went out:
The mossy banks and the meandering paths,
The happy flowers and the repining trees,
Were seen no more: the very roses' odors
Died in the arms of the adoring airs.
All—all expired save thee—save less than thou:
Save only the divine light in thine eyes—
Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes.
I saw but them—they were the world to me.
I saw but them—saw only them for hours—
Saw only them until the moon went down.
What wild heart-histories seemed to lie enwritten
Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres!
How dark a woe! yet how sublime a hope!
How silently serene a sea of pride!
How daring an ambition! yet how deep—
How fathomless a capacity for love!

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
Into a western couch of thunder-cloud;
And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees
Didst glide away. *Only thine eyes remained.*

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They *would not* go—they never yet have gone.
Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,
They have not left me (as my hopes have) since.
They follow me—they lead me through the years.
They are my ministers—yet I their slave.
Their office is to illumine and enkindle—
My duty, *to be saved* by their bright light,
And purified in their electric fire,
And sanctified in their elysian fire.
They fill my soul with Beauty (which is Hope),
And are far up in Heaven—the stars I kneel to
In the sad, silent watches of my night;
While even in the meridian glare of day
I see them still—two sweetly scintillant
Venuses, unextinguished by the sun!

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ANNABEL LEE *

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of ANNABEL LEE;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea:
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
I and my ANNABEL LEE;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea.
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful ANNABEL LEE;

* In 1849 Poe sent a copy of this ballad to the *Union Magazine*, in which publication it appeared in January, 1850, three months after the author's death. Whilst suffering from "hope deferred" as to its fate, Poe presented a copy of "Annabel Lee" to the editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, who published it in the November number of his periodical, a month after Poe's death. In the meantime the poet's own copy, left among his papers, passed into the hands of the person engaged to edit his works, and he quoted the poem in an obituary of Poe, in the New York *Tribune*, before any one else had an opportunity of publishing it.—EDITOR.

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So that her highborn kinsmen came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my ANNABEL LEE.
But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE;
And the stars never rise but I see the bright eyes
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE;
And, so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea—
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

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A VALENTINE *

[Published in Sartain's *Union Magazine* for March, 1849.]

For her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes,
Brightly expressive as the twins of Leda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that, nestling lies
Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader
Search narrowly the lines!—they hold a treasure
Divine—a talisman—an amulet
That must be worn *at heart*. Search well the measure—
The words—the syllables! Do not forget
The trivialest point, or you may lose your labor!
And yet there is in this no Gordian knot
Which one might not undo without a sabre,
If one could merely comprehend the plot.
Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
Eyes scintillating soul, there lie *perdus*
Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
Of poets by poets—as the name is a poet's too.
Its letters, although naturally lying
Like the knight Pinto—Mendez Ferdinando—
Still form a synonym for Truth—Cease trying!
You will not read the riddle, though you do
the best you *can* do.

* To discover the names in this and the following poem, read the first letter of the first line in connection with the second letter of the second line, the third letter of the third line, the fourth of the fourth and so on to the end.—Editor.

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AN ENIGMA*

[Published in Sartain's *Union Magazine* for March, 1848.]

"SELDOM we find," says Solomon Don Dunce,
"Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet.
Through all the flimsy things we see at once
As easily as through a Naples bonnet—
Trash of all trash!—how *can* a lady don it?
Yet heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff—
Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff
Twirls into trunk-paper the while you con it
And, veritably, Sol is right enough.
The general tuckermanities are arrant
Bubbles—ephemeral and *so* transparent—
But *this* is, now—you may depend upon it—
Stable, opaque, immortal—all by dint
Of the dear names that lie concealed within't.

* See note on previous page.—EDITOR.

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TO MY MOTHER*

[Published in the *Flag of Our Union*, 1849.]

BECAUSE I feel that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
None so devotional as that of "Mother,"
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you—
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you,
In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother—my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself; but you
Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

* Addressed to the poet's mother-in-law, Mrs. Maria Clemm. —EDITOR.

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FOR ANNIE *

[First published in the *Flag of Our Union* in the spring of 1849. Poe, annoyed at some misprints in this issue, had a corrected copy inserted in the *Home Journal*.]

THANK Heaven! the crisis—
The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last—
And the fever called "Living"
Is conquered at last.

Sadly, I know,
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length—
But no matter!—I feel
I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly,
Now, in my bed,
That any beholder
Might fancy me dead—
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.

*Mrs. Annie Richmond, of Lowell, Mass.—EDITOR.

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The moaning and groaning,
  The sighing and sobbing,
Are quieted now,
  With that horrible throbbing
At heart:—ah, that horrible,
  Horrible throbbing!

The sickness—the nausea—
  The pitiless pain—
Have ceased, with the fever
  That maddened my brain—
With the fever called "Living"
  That burned in my brain.

And oh! of all tortures
  That torture the worst
Has abated—the terrible
  Torture of thirst,
For the naphthaline river
  Of Passion accurst:—
I have drunk of a water
  That quenches all thirst:—

Of a water that flows,
  With a lullaby sound,
From a spring, but a very few
  Feet under ground—
From a cavern not very far
  Down under ground.

And ah! let it never
  Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy

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And narrow my bed—
For man never slept
In a different bed;
And, to *sleep*, you must slumber
In just such a bed.

My tantalised spirit
Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never
Regretting its roses—
Its old agitations
Of myrtles and roses:

For now, while so quietly
Lying, it fancies
A holier odor
About it, of pansies—
A rosemary odor,
Commingled with pansies—
With rue and the beautiful
Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
And the beauty of Annie—
Drowned in a bath
Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently

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To sleep on her breast—
Deeply to sleep
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
To keep me from harm—
To the queen of the angels
To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,
Now in my bed,
(Knowing her love)
That you fancy me dead—
And I rest so contentedly,
Now in my bed,
(With her love at my breast)
That you fancy me dead—
That you shudder to look at me,
Thinking me dead.

But my heart it is brighter
Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
For it sparkles with Annie—
It glows with the light
Of the love of my Annie—
With the thought of the light
Of the eyes of my Annie.

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TO F——*

BELOVED! amid the earnest woes
That crowd around my earthly path—
(Drear path, alas! where grows
Not even one lonely rose)—
My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee, and therein knows
An Eden of bland repose.

And thus thy memory is to me
Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea—
Some ocean throbbing far and free
With storms—but where meanwhile
Serenest skies continually
Just o'er that one bright island smile.

* "To F——" (Frances Sargent Osgood) appeared in the *Broadway Journal* for April, 1845. These lines are but slightly varied from those inscribed "To Mary," in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for July, 1835, and subsequently republished, with the two stanzas transposed, in *Graham's Magazine* for March, 1842, as "To One Departed."—EDITOR.

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TO FRANCES S. OSGOOD*

THOU wouldst be loved?—then let thy heart
From its present pathway part not;
Being everything which now thou art,
Be nothing which thou art not.
So with the world thy gentle ways,
Thy grace, thy more than beauty,
Shall be an endless theme of praise,
And love a simple duty.

* Published in the *Broadway Journal* for September, 1845. The earliest version of these lines appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for September, 1835, as "Lines written in an Album," and was addressed to Eliza White, the proprietor's daughter. Slightly revised, the poem reappeared in Burton's *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1839, as "To —."—EDITOR.

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ELDORADO

[Published in R. W. Griswold's collection of Poe's Works, 1850.]

GAILY bedight,
A gallant knight
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length
He met a pilgrim shadow—
"Shadow," said he,
"Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?"

"Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,"
The shade replied,
"If you seek for Eldorado!"

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EULALIE—A SONG

[Published in the *American Whig Review*, July, 1845.]

I DWELT alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide,
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride—
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling bride.

Ah, less—less bright
The stars of the night
Than the eyes of the radiant girl!
And never a flake
That the vapor can make
With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,
Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded curl—
Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most humble and careless curl.

Now Doubt—now Pain
Come never again,
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
And all day long
Shines, bright and strong,
Astarté within the sky,
While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron eye—
While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet eye.

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A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM

[Published in R. W. Griswold's collection of Poe's works, 1850.]

TAKE this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow—
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less *gone?*
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand—
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep—while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is *all* that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

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TO M. L. S.——*

Of all who hail thy presence as the morning—
Of all to whom thine absence is the night—
The blotting utterly from out high heaven
The sacred sun—of all who, weeping, bless thee
Hourly for hope—for life—ah, above all,
For the resurrection of deep buried faith
In truth, in virtue, in humanity—
Of all who, on despair's unhallowed bed
Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen
At thy soft-murmured words, "Let there be light!"
At thy soft-murmured words that were fulfilled
In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes—
Of all who owe thee most, whose gratitude
Nearest resembles worship,—oh, remember
The truest, the most fervently devoted,
And think that these weak lines are written by him—
By him who, as he pens them, thrills to think
His spirit is communing with an angel's.

* Published in the *Home Journal*, March 13, 1847, with the following introduction by the editor, N. P. Willis: "The following seems said over a hand clasped in the speaker's two. It is by Edgar A. Poe and is evidently the pouring out of a very deep feeling of gratitude." The person addressed is Mrs. Marie Louise Shew, whose nursing probably saved Poe from death.—EDITOR.

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TO —— —— [MARIE LOUISE]*

[Published in the *Columbian Magazine*, March, 1848.]

Not long ago, the writer of these lines,
In the mad pride of intellectuality,
Maintained "the power of words"—denied that ever
A thought arose within the human brain
Beyond the utterance of the human tongue:
And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
Two words—two foreign soft dissyllables—
Italian tones, made only to be murmured
By angels dreaming in the moonlit "dew
That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill;"—
Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,
Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought,
Richer, far wider, far diviner visions
Than even the seraph harper, Israfel,
(Who has "the sweetest voice of all God's creatures,")
Could hope to utter. And I! my spells are broken.

* Mrs. Shew. See preceding poem.—Editor.

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The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.
With thy dear name as text, though bidden by
thee,
I cannot write—I cannot speak or think—
Alas, I cannot feel; for 'tis not feeling,
This standing motionless upon the golden
Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams,
Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,
And thrilling as I see, upon the right,
Upon the left, and all the way along,
Amid empurpled vapors, far away
To where the prospect terminates—*thee only!*

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THE CITY IN THE SEA

[Published in 1831, under the title of "The Doomed City," in variant form from that of the present (1845).]

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy Heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathed friezes intertwine

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The viol, the violet, and the vine.
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gaily-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

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THE SLEEPER

[Published in 1831 under title of "Irene," in variant form from that of the present (1845).]

At midnight in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
Upon the quiet mountain top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.
The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest;
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All Beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies
(Her casement open to the skies)
Irene, with her Destinies!

Oh, lady bright! can it be right—
This window open to the night?

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The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop—
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully—so fearfully—
Above the closed and fringed lid
'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall!
Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress!
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all-solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
For ever with unopened eye,
While the dim sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep;
Soft may the worms about her creep!
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold—
Some vault that oft hath flung its black

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And winged panels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls,
Of her grand family funerals—
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood many an idle stone—
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin!
It was the dead who groaned within.

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BRIDAL BALLAD

[Published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, January, 1837; republished with omissions and alterations in 1841 and 1845.]

THE ring is on my hand,
And the wreath is on my brow;
Satins and jewels grand
Are all at my command,
And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well;
But, when first he breathed his vow,
I felt my bosom swell—
For the words rang as a knell,
And the voice seemed *his* who fell
In the battle down the dell,
And who is happy now.

But he spoke to reassure me,
And he kissed my pallid brow,
While a reverie came o'er me,
And to the churchyard bore me,
And I sighed to him before me,
Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
"Oh, I am happy now!"

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And thus the words were spoken,
And this the plighted vow,
And, though my faith be broken,
And, though my heart be broken,
Behold the golden token
That *proves* me happy now!

Would to God I could awaken!
For I dream I know not how,
And my soul is sorely shaken
Lest an evil step be taken,—
Lest the dead who is forsaken
May not be happy now.

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A PÆAN

[Published in the edition of 1831.]

I.

How shall the burial rite be read?
The solemn song be sung?
The requiem for the loveliest dead,
That ever died so young?

II.

Her friends are gazing on her,
And on her gaudy bier,
And weep!—oh! to dishonour
Dead beauty with a tear!

III.

They loved her for her wealth—
And they hated her for her pride—
But she grew in feeble health,
And they *loved* her—that she died.

IV.

They tell me (while they speak
Of her "costly broidcr'd pall")

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That my voice is growing weak—
That I should not sing at all—

V.

Or that my tone should be
Tun'd to such solemn song
So mournfully—so mournfully,
That the dead may feel no wrong.

VI.

But she is gone above,
With young hope at her side,
And I am drunk with love
Of the dead, who is my bride.—

VII.

Of the dead—dead who lies
All perfum'd there,
With the death upon her eyes,
And the life upon her hair.

VIII.

Thus on the coffin loud and long
I strike—the murmur sent
Through the grey chambers to my song.
Shall be the accompaniment.

IX.

Thou diedst in thy life's June—
But thou didst not die too fair:
Thou didst not die too soon,
Nor with too calm an air.

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X.

From more than friends on earth,
Thy life and love are riven,
To join the untainted mirth
Of more than thrones in heaven.—

XI.

Therefore, to thee this night
I will no requiem raise,
But waft thee on thy flight,
With a Pæan of old days.

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LENORE*

Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown for ever!
Let the bell toll!—a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river.
And, Guy de Vere, hast *thou* no tear?—weep now or never more!
See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!
Come! let the burial rite be read—the funeral song be sung—
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young;
A dirge for her—the doubly dead—in that she died so young.

* "Built up from the preceding poem. Published in various forms in 1836, 1843, and 1845. The version which appeared in *The Pioneer*, February, 1843, was in irregular measure. Of this Thomas Wentworth Higginson says: "Never in American literature, I think, was such a fountain of melody flung into the air as when 'Lenore' first appeared in *The Pioneer*, and never did fountain so drop downward as when Poe arranged it in its present form [regular iambic heptameter]. The irregular measure had a beauty as original as that of 'Christabel'; and the lines had an ever-varying cadence of their own, until their author himself took them and cramped them into couplets. What a change from

Peccavimus!
But rave not thus!
And let the solemn song

Go up to God so mournfully that *she* may feel no wrong!

to the amended version portioned off in regular lengths!"

However, this is a difference which is apparent only to the eye. Division of verse into any particular line-form was with Poe (see his "Rationale of Verse," Vol. X., present edition) wholly immaterial. "Lenore" is here printed as Poe desired it to appear in his collected poems.—EDITOR.

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"Wretches!" ye loved her for her wealth and
hated her for her pride,
And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed
her—that she died!
How *shall* the ritual, then, be read?—the requiem
how be sung
By you—by yours, the evil eye,—by yours, the
slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and
died so young?

Peccavimus; but rave not thus! and let a Sab-
bath song
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no
wrong!
The sweet Lenore hath gone before, with Hope,
that flew beside,
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should
have been thy bride—
For her, the fair and debonair, that now so
lowly lies,
The life upon her yellow hair but not within her
eyes—
The life still there, upon her hair—the death
upon her eyes.

"Avaunt! to-night my heart is light. No dirge
will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a pæan of
old days!
Let no bell toll, then; lest her soul, amid its
hallowed mirth,

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Should catch the note, as it doth float up from
the damned Earth.
To friends above, from fiends below, the indig-
nant ghost is riven—
From Hell unto a high estate far up within the
Heaven—
From grief and groan to a golden throne beside
the King of Heaven."*

* The edition of 1845 has the following variant form of the last stanza:

"Avaunt!—avaunt! from fiends below, the indignant ghost is
riven—
From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven—
From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the King of
Heaven."
Let no bell toll then!—lest her soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note as it doth float up from the damnéd
Earth!—
And I!—to-night my heart is light!—no dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a Pæan of old days!

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TO ONE IN PARADISE*

[Published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, July, 1835.]

THOU wast that all to me, love,
For which my soul did pine —
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
"On! on!"—but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
"No more—no more—no more"—
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)

* Introduced by Poe in his tale, "The Assignation," q. v. Vol. VI., present edition.—EDITOR.

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Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar!

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams!

Alas! for that accursed time
They bore thee o'er the billow,
From love to titled age and crime,
And an unholy pillow!—
From me, and from our misty clime,
Where weeps the silver willow!

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THE COLISEUM

[Published in the Baltimore *Saturday Visiter*, 1833.]

TYPE of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary
Of lofty contemplation left to Time
By buried centuries of pomp and power!
At length—at length—after so many days
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst,
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,)
I kneel, an altered and an humble man,
Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld!
Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!
I feel ye now—I feel ye in your strength—
O spells more sure than e'er Judæan king
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane!
O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!
Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold,
A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!
Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!

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Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
Lit by the wan light of the horned moon,
The swift and silent lizard of the stones!
But stay! these walls—these ivy-clad arcades—
These mouldering plinths—these sad and blackened shafts—
These vague entablatures—this crumbling frieze—
These shattered cornices—this wreck—this ruin—
These stones—alas! these grey stones—are they all—
All of the famed, and the colossal left
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me?
"Not all"—the Echoes answer me—"not all!
Prophetic sounds and loud, arise for ever
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
As melody from Memmon to the Sun.
We rule the hearts of mightiest men—we rule
With a despotic sway all giant minds.
We are not impotent—we pallid stones.
Not all our power is gone—not all our fame—
Not all the magic of our high renown—
Not all the wonder that encircles us—
Not all the mystics that in us lie—
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory."

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THE HAUNTED PALACE*

[Published in the Baltimore *Museum*, April, 1839.]

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion—
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingéd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically.

* Introduced by Poe in his tale, "The Fall of the House of Usher," q. v. Vol. VI., present edition.—EDITOR.

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To a lute's well-tunéd law,
Round about a throne where, sitting
(Prophyrogene!)
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed,
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old-time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out for ever
And laugh—but smile no more.

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THE CONQUEROR WORM*

[Published in *Graham's Magazine*, January, 1843.]

Lo! 'tis a gala night
Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly—
Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their Condor wings
Invisible Wo!

That motley drama—oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot!

* Introduced by Poe in his tale, "Ligeia," q. v. Vol. VI. present edition.—EDITOR.

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With its Phantom chased for evermore,
By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!
It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And the angels sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
And the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
And its hero the Conqueror Worm.

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SILENCE

[Published in Burton's *Gentleman's Magazine*, April, 1840.]

THERE are some qualities—some incorporate things,
That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
There is a two-fold *Silence*—sea and shore—
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,
Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless: his name's "No More."
He is the corporate Silence: dread him not!
No power hath he of evil in himself;
But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)
Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
No foot of man), commend thyself to God!

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DREAMLAND

[Published in *Graham's Magazine*, June, 1844.]

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule—
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of SPACE—out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,
With forms that no man can discover
For the dews that drip all over;
Mountains toppling evermore;
Into seas without a shore;
Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging, unto skies of fire;
Lakes that endlessly outspread
Their lone waters—lone and dead,
Their still waters—still and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily.

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By the lakes that thus outspread
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their sad waters, sad and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily,—
By the mountains—near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever,—
By the grey woods,—by the swamp
Where the toad and the newt encamp,—
By the dismal tarns and pools
Where dwell the Ghouls,—
By each spot the most unholy—
In each nook most melancholy,—
There the traveller meets aghast
Sheeted Memories of the Past—
Shrouded forms that start and sigh
As they pass the wanderer by—
White-robed forms of friends long given,
In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
'Tis a peaceful, soothing region—
For the spirit that walks in shadow
'Tis—oh, 'tis an Eldorado!
But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not—dare not openly view it;
Never its mysteries are exposed
To the weak human eye unclosed;
So wills its King, who hath forbid
The uplifting of the fringéd lid;
And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

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By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

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TO ZANTE

[Published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, January, 1837.]

FAIR isle, that from the fairest of all flowers,
Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take!
How many memories of what radiant hours
At sight of thee and thine at once awake!
How many scenes of what departed bliss!
How many thoughts of what entombéd hopes!
How many visions of a maiden that is
No more—no more upon thy verdant slopes!
No more! alas, that magical sad sound
Transforming all! Thy charms shall please—
no more—
Thy memory *no more!* Accurséd ground
Henceforth I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,
O hyacinthine isle! O purple Zante!
"Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!"

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HYMN

[Published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, April, 1835, as a part of Poe's tale, "Morella," q. v. Vol. VI., present edition.]

AT morn—at noon—at twilight dim—
Maria! thou hast heard my hymn!
In joy and wo—in good and ill—
Mother of God, be with me still!
When the Hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee;
Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my Future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine!

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SCENES FROM "POLITIAN"*

AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA

I.

ROME.—A Hall in a Palace. ALESSANDRA and CASTIGLIONE.

Alessandra. Thou art sad, Castiglione.
Castiglione. Sad!—not I.
Oh, I'm the happiest, happiest man in Rome!
A few days more, thou knowest, my Alessandra,
Will make thee mine. Oh, I am very happy!
Aless. Methinks thou hast a singular way of showing
Thy happiness—what ails thee, cousin of mine?
Why didst thou sigh so deeply?
Cas. Did I sigh?
I was not conscious of it. It is a fashion,
A silly—a most silly fashion I have
When I am *very* happy. Did I sigh?
(sighing.)
Aless. Thou didst. Thou are not well. Thou hast indulged

* First published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for December, 1835, and January, 1836. Republished, unaltered, in the 1845 collection of poems by Poe. While a more complete draft of the drama is in existence, these seem to be the only portions which the author was willing to let see the light. —EDITOR.

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Too much of late, and I am vexed to see it.
Late hours and wine, Castiglione,—these
Will ruin thee! thou art already altered—
Thy looks are haggard—nothing so wears away
The constitution as late hours and wine.

Cas. (musing). Nothing, fair cousin, nothing—not even deep sorrow—
Wears it away like evil hours and wine.
I will amend.

Aless. Do it! I would have thee drop
Thy riotous company, too—fellows low born
Ill suit the like of old Di Broglio's heir
And Alessandra's husband.

Cas. I will drop them.

Aless. Thou wilt—thou must. Attend thou also more
To thy dress and equipage—they are over plain
For thy lofty rank and fashion—much depends
Upon appearances.

Cas. I'll see to it.

Aless. Then see to it!—pay more attention, sir,
To a becoming carriage—much thou wantest
In dignity.

Cas. Much, much, oh, much I want
In proper dignity.

Aless. (haughtily). Thou mockest me, sir!

Cas. (abstractedly). Sweet, gentle Lalage!

Aless. Heard I aright?
I speak to him—he speaks of Lalage!
Sir Count! *(places her hand on his shoulder)* what art thou dreaming? He's not well!
What ails thee, sir?

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Cas. (starting). Cousin! fair cousin!—
Madam!
I crave thy pardon—indeed I am not well—
Your hand from off my shoulder, if you please.
This air is most oppressive!—Madam—the Duke!

Enter Di Broglio.

Di Broglio. My son, I've news for thee!—
hey?—what's the matter? *(observing Alessandra).*
I' the pouts? Kiss her, Castiglione! kiss her,
You dog! and make it up, I say, this minute!
I've news for you both. Politian is expected
Hourly in Rome—Politian, Earl of Leicester!
We'll have him at the wedding. 'Tis his first visit
To the imperial city.
Aless. What! Politian
Of Britain, Earl of Leicester?
Di Brog. The same, my love.
We'll have him at the wedding. A man quite young
In years, but grey in fame. I have not seen him,
But Rumour speaks of him as a prodigy
Pre-eminent in arts, and arms, and wealth,
And high descent. We'll have him at the wedding.
Aless. I have heard much of this Politian.
Gay, volatile and giddy—is he not,
And little given to thinking?
Di Brog. Far from it, love.

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No branch, they say, of all philosophy
So deep abstruse he has not mastered it.
Learned as few are learned.
Aless. 'Tis very strange!
I have known men have seen Politian
And sought his company. They speak of him
As of one who entered madly into life,
Drinking the cup of pleasure to the dregs.
Cas. Ridiculous! Now *I* have seen Politian
And know him well—nor learned nor mirthful he.
He is a dreamer, and a man shut out
From common passions.
Di Brog. Children, we disagree.
Let us go forth and taste the fragrant air
Of the garden. Did I dream, or did I hear
Politian was a *melancholy* man? *(Exeunt.)*

II.

ROME.—A Lady's Apartment, with a window open and looking into a garden. LALAGE, in deep mourning, reading at a table on which lie some books and a hand-mirror. In the background JACINTA (a servant maid) leans carelessly upon a chair.

Lalage. Jacinta! is it thou?
Jacinta (pertly). Yes, ma'am, I'm here.
Lal. I did not know, Jacinta you were in waiting.
Sit down!—let not my presence trouble you—
Sit down!—for I am humble, most humble.
Jac. (aside). 'Tis time.
(Jacinta seats herself in a side-long manner upon the chair, resting her elbows

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upon the back, and regarding her mistress with a contemptuous look. Lalage continues to read.)

Lal. "It in another climate, so he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not i' this soil!"
(pauses—turns over some leaves, and resumes.)
"No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower—
But Ocean ever to refresh mankind
Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind."
Oh, beautiful!—most beautiful!—how like
To what my fevered soul doth dream of Heaven!
O happy land! *(pauses)* She died!—the maiden died!
O still more happy maiden who couldst die!
Jacinta!
(Jacinta returns no answer, and Lalage presently resumes.)
Again!—a similar tale
Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea!
Thus speaketh one Ferdinand in the words of the play—
"She died full young"—one Bossola answers him—
"I think not so—her infelicity
Seemed to have years too many"—Ah, luckless lady!
Jacinta! *(still no answer).*
Here's a far sterner story—
But like—oh, like in its despair—
Of that Egyptian queen, winning so easily

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A thousand hearts—losing at length her own.
She died. Thus endeth the history—and her maids
Lean over her and weep—two gentle maids
With gentle names—Eiros and Charmion!
Rainbow and Dove!—Jacinta!

Jac. (pettishly). Madam, what *is* it?

Lal. Wilt thou, my good Jacinta, be so kind
As go down in the library and bring me
The Holy Evangelists?

Jac. Pshaw! *(Exit.)*

Lal. If there be balm
For the wounded spirit in Gilead, it is there!
Dew in the night time of my bitter trouble
Will there be found—"dew sweeter far than that
Which hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill."

(re-enter Jacinta, and throws a volume on the table.)

There, ma'am, 's the book. Indeed she is very troublesome. *(aside.)*

Lal. *(astonished).* What didst thou say, Jacinta?
Have I done aught
To grieve thee or to vex thee?—I am sorry.
For thou hast served me long and ever been
Trustworthy and respectful. *(resumes her reading.)*

Jac. I can't believe
She has any more jewels—no—no—she gave me all. *(aside.)*

Lal. What didst thou say, Jacinta? Now I bethink me

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Thou hast not spoken lately of thy wedding.
How fares good Ugo?—and when is it to be?
Can I do aught?—is there no further aid
Thou needest, Jacinta?
Jac. Is there no *further* aid!
That's meant for me. (*aside.*) I'm sure, madam, you need not
Be always throwing those jewels in my teeth.
Lal. Jewels! Jacinta,—now indeed, Jacinta,
I thought not of the jewels.
Jac. Oh, perhaps not!
But then I might have sworn it. After all,
There's Ugo says the ring is only paste,
For he's sure the Count Castiglione never
Would have given a real diamond to such as you;
And at the best I'm certain, madam, you cannot
Have use for jewels *now*. But I might have sworn it. (*Exit.*)
(*Lalage bursts into tears and leans her head upon the table—after a short pause raises it.*)
Lal. Poor Lalange!—and is it come to this?
Thy servant maid!—but courage!—'tis but a viper
Whom thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul! (*taking up the mirror.*)
Ha! here at least's a friend—too much a friend
In earlier days—a friend will not deceive thee.
Fair mirror and true! now tell me (for thou canst)
A tale—a pretty tale—and heed thou not
Though it be rife with woe. It answers me.

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It speaks of sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks,
And Beauty long deceased—remembers me.
Of Joy departed—Hope, the Seraph Hope,
Inurnéd and entombed!—now, in a tone
Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible,
Whispers of early grave untimely yawning
For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true!—thou liest not!
Thou hast no end to gain—no heart to break—
Castiglione lied who said he loved——
Thou true—he false!—false!—false!

(*While she speaks, a monk enters her apartment and approaches unobserved.*)

Monk. Refuge thou hast,
Sweet daughter! in Heaven. Think of eternal things!
Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray!

Lal. (*arising hurriedly*). I *cannot* pray!—
My soul is at war with God!
The frightful sounds of merriment below
Disturb my senses—go! I cannot pray—
The sweet airs from the garden worry me!
Thy presence grieves me—go!—thy priestly raiment
Fills me with dread—thy ebony crucifix
With horror and awe!

Monk. Think of thy precious soul!

Lal. Think of my early days!—think of my father
And mother in Heaven! think of our quiet home,
And the rivulet that ran before the door!

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Think of my little sisters!—think of them!
And think of me!—think of my trusting love
And confidence—his vows—my ruin—think—think
Of my unspeakable misery!—begone!
Yet stay! yet stay!—what was it thou saidst of prayer
And penitence? Didst thou not speak of faith
And vows before the throne?
Monk. I did.
Lal. 'Tis well.
There *is* a vow 'twere fitting should be made—
A sacred vow, imperative and urgent,
A solemn vow!
Monk. Daughter, this zeal is well!
Lal. Father, this zeal is anything but well!
Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing?
A crucifix whereon to register
This sacred vow? (*he hands her his own.*)
Not that—Oh! no!—no!—no! (*shuddering.*)
Not that! Not that!—I tell thee, holy man,
Thy raiments and thy ebony cross affright me!
Stand back! I have a crucifix myself,—
I have a crucifix! Methinks 'twere fitting
The deed—the vow—the symbol of the deed—
And the deed's register should tally, father!
(*draws a cross-handled dagger and raises it on high.*)
Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine
Is written in Heaven!
Monk. Thy words are madness, daughter,
And speak a purpose unholy—thy lips are livid—

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Thine eyes are wild—tempt not the wrath divine!
Pause ere too late!—oh, be not—be not rash!
Swear not the oath—oh, swear it not!
Lal. 'Tis sworn!

III.

An Apartment in a Palace. POLITIAN and BALDAZZAR.

Baldazzar. Arouse thee now, Politian!
Thou must not—nay indeed, indeed, thou shalt not
Give away unto these humours. Be thyself!
Shake off the idle fancies that beset thee,
And live, for now thou diest!
Politian. Not so, Baldazzar!
Surely I live.
Bal. Politian, it doth grieve me
To see thee thus!
Pol. Baldazzar, it doth grieve me
To give thee cause for grief, my honoured friend.
Command me, sir! what wouldst thou have me do?
At thy behest I will shake off that nature
Which from my forefathers I did inherit,
Which with my mother's milk I did imbibe,
And be no more Politian, but some other.
Command me, sir!
Bal. To the field then—to the field—
To the senate or the field.
Pol. Alas! alas!
There is an imp would follow me even there!

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There is an imp *hath* followed me even there!
There is——what voice was that?
Bal. I heard it not.
I heard not any voice except thine own,
And the echo of thine own.
Pol. Then I but dreamed.
Bal. Give not thy soul to dreams: the camp
—the court
Befit thee—Fame awaits thee—Glory calls—
And her the trumpet-tongued thou wilt not hear
In hearkening to imaginary sounds
And phantom voices.
Pol. It *is* a phantom voice!
Didst thou not hear it *then?*
Bal. I heard it not.
Pol. Thou heardst it not!——Baldazzar,
speak no more
To me, Politian, of thy camps and courts.
Oh! I am sick, sick, sick, even unto death
Of the hollow and high-sounding vanities
Of the populous Earth! Bear with me yet
awhile!
We have been boys together—school-fellows—
And now are friends—yet shall not be so long—
For in the Eternal City thou shalt do me
A kind and gentle office, and a Power—
A Power august, benignant, and supreme—
Shall then absolve thee of all further duties
Unto thy friend.
Bal. Thou speakest a fearful riddle
I *will* not understand.
Pol. Yet now as Fate
Approaches, and the Hours are breathing low,

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The sands of Time are changed to golden grains,
And dazzle me, Baldazzar. Alas! alas!
I *cannot* die, having within my heart
So keen a relish for the beautiful
As hath been kindled within it. Methinks the air
Is balmier now than it was wont to be—
Rich melodies are floating in the winds—
A rarer loveliness bedecks the earth—
And with a holier lustre the quiet moon
Sitteth in Heaven.—Hist! hist! thou canst not say
Thou hearest not *now*, Baldazzar?

Bal. Indeed I hear not.

Pol. Not hear it!—listen now—listen!—the faintest sound
And yet the sweetest that ear ever heard!
A lady's voice!—and sorrow in the tone!
Baldazzar, it oppresses me like a spell!
Again!—again!—how solemnly it falls
Into my heart of hearts! that eloquent voice
Surely I never heard—yet it were well
Had I *but* heard it with its thrilling tones
In earlier days!

Bal. I myself hear it now.
Be still!—the voice, if I mistake not greatly,
Proceeds from yonder lattice—which you may see
Very plainly through the window—it belongs,
Does it not? unto this palace of the Duke.
The singer is undoubtedly beneath
The roof of his Excellency—and perhaps
Is even that Alessandra of whom he spoke

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As the betrothed of Castiglione,
His son and heir.

Pol. Be still!—it comes again!

Voice (*very faintly*). "And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus,
That have loved thee so long,
In wealth and woe among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!"*

Bal. The song is English, and I oft have heard it
In merry England—never so plaintively—
Hist! hist! it comes again!

Voice (*more loudly*). "Is it so strong
As for to leave me thus,
That have loved thee so long,
In wealth and woe among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay! say nay!"

Bal. 'Tis hushed and all is still!

Pol. All *is not* still.

Bal. Let us go down.

Pol. Go down, Baldazzar, go!

Bal. The hour is growing late—the Duke awaits us,—
Thy presence is expected in the hall
Below. What ails thee, Earl Politian?

Voice (*distinctly*). "Who have loved thee so long,

* By Sir Thomas Wyatt.—Editor.

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In wealth and woe among,
And is thy heart so strong?
Say nay! say nay!"

Bal. Let us descend!—'tis time. Politian, give
These fancies to the wind. Remember, pray,
Your bearing lately savoured much of rudeness
Unto the Duke. Arouse thee! and remember!

Pol. Remember? I do. Lead on! I *do* remember (*going.*)
Let us descend. Believe me I would give,
Freely would give the broad lands of my earldom
To look upon the face hidden by yon lattice—
"To gaze upon that veiléd face, and hear
Once more that silent tongue."

Bal. Let me beg you, sir,
Descend with me—the Duke may be offended.
Let us go down, I pray you.

Voice (*loudly*). *Say nay!—say nay!*

Pol. (*aside*). 'Tis strange!—'tis very strange —methought the voice
Chimed in with my desires and bade me stay!
(*Approaching the window.*)
Sweet voice! I heed thee, and will surely stay.
Now be this Fancy, by Heaven, or be it Fate,
Still will I not descend. Baldazzar, make
Apology unto the Duke for me;
I go not down to-night.

Bal. Your lordship's pleasure
Shall be attended to. Good-night, Politian.

Pol. Good-night, my friend, good-night.

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IV.

The Gardens of a Palace—Moonlight. LALAGE and POLITIAN.

Lalage. And dost thou speak of love
To *me,* Politian?—dost thou speak of love
To Lalage?—ah woe—ah woe is me!
This mockery is most cruel—most cruel indeed!
Politian. Weep not! oh, sob not thus!—thy bitter tears
Will madden me. Oh, mourn not, Lalage—
Be comforted! I know—I know it all,
And *still* I speak of love. Look at me, brightest,
And beautiful Lalage!—turn here thine eyes!
Thou askest me if I could speak of love,
Knowing what I know, and seeing what I have seen.
Thou askest me that—and thus I answer thee—
Thus on my bended knee I answer thee.
(*kneeling.*)
Sweet Lalage, *I love thee—love thee—love thee;*
Thro' good and ill—thro' weal and woe, *I love thee.*
Not mother, with her first-born on her knee,
Thrills with intenser love than I for thee.
Not on God's altar, in any time or clime,
Burned there a holier fire than burneth now
Within my spirit for *thee.* And do I love?
(*arising.*)
Even for thy woes I love thee—even for thy woes,—
Lal. Alas, proud Earl,
Thou dost forget thyself, remembering me!
How, in thy father's halls, among the maidens

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Pure and reproachless, of thy princely line,
Could the dishonoured Lalage abide?
Thy wife, and with a tainted memory—
My seared and blighted name, how would it tally
With the ancestral honours of thy house,
And with thy glory?

Pol. Speak not to me of glory!
I hate—I loathe the name; I do abhor
The unsatisfactory and ideal thing.
Art thou not Lalage, and I Politian?
Do I not love—art thou not beautiful—
What need we more? Ha! glory! now speak not of it:
By all I hold most sacred and most solemn—
By all my wishes now—my fears hereafter—
By all I scorn on earth and hope in heaven—
There is no deed I would more glory in,
Than in thy cause to scoff at this same glory
And trample it under foot. What matters it—
What matters it, my fairest, and my best,
That we go down unhonoured and forgotten
Into the dust—so we descend together?
Descend together—and then—and then perchance—

Lal. Why dost thou pause, Politian?

Pol. And then perchance
Arise together, Lalage, and roam
The starry and quiet dwellings of the blest,
And still—

Lal. Why dost thou pause, Politian?

Pol. And still *together—together.*

Lal. Now, Earl of Leicester!
Thou *lovest* me, and in my heart of hearts

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I feel thou lovest me truly.
Pol. O Lalage!
(*throwing himself upon his knee.*)
And lovest thou *me?*
Lal. Hist! hush! within the gloom
Of yonder trees methought a figure passed—
A spectral figure, solemn, and slow, and noiseless—
Like the grim shadow Conscience, solemn and noiseless.
(*walks across and returns.*)
I was mistaken—'twas but a giant bough
Stirred by the autumn wind. Politian!
Pol. My Lalage—my love! why art thou moved?
Why dost thou turn so pale? Not Conscience' self,
Far less a shadow which thou likenest to it,
Should shake the firm spirit thus. But the night wind
Is chilly—and these melancholy boughs
Throw over all things a gloom.
Lal. Politian!
Thou speakest to me of love. Knowest thou the land
With which all tongues are busy—a land new found—
Miraculously found by one of Genoa—
A thousand leagues within the golden west?
A fairy land of flowers, and fruit, and sunshine,—
And crystal lakes, and over-arching forests,

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And mountains, around whose towering summits the winds
Of Heaven untrammelled flow—which air to breathe
Is Happiness now, and will be Freedom hereafter
In days that are to come?
Pol. Oh, wilt thou—wilt thou
Fly to that Paradise—my Lalage, wilt thou
Fly thither with me? There Care shall be forgotten,
And Sorrow shall be no more, and Eros be all.
And life shall then be mine, for I will live
For thee, and in thine eyes—and thou shalt be
No more a mourner—but the radiant Joys
Shall wait upon thee, and the angel Hope
Attend thee ever; and I will kneel to thee
And worship thee, and call thee my beloved,
My own, my beautiful, my love, my wife,
My all;—oh, wilt thou—wilt thou, Lalage,
Fly thither with me?
Lal. A deed is to be done—
Castiglione lives!
Pol. And he shall die! (*Exit.*)
Lal. (*after a pause*). And—he—shall—die!——alas!
Castiglione die? Who spoke the words?
Where am I?—what was it he said?—Politian!
Thou *art* not gone—thou art not gone, Politian!
I *feel* thou art not gone—yet dare not look,
Lest I behold thee not—thou *couldst* not go
With those words upon thy lips—oh, speak to me!

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And let me hear thy voice—one word—one word,
To say thou art not gone,—one little sentence,
To say how thou dost scorn—how thou dost hate
My womanly weakness. Ha! ha! thou *art* not gone—
Oh, speak to me! I *knew* thou wouldst not go!
I knew thou wouldst not, couldst not, *durst* not go.
Villain, thou *art* not gone—thou mockest me!
And thus I clutch thee—thus!——He is gone, he is gone—
Gone—gone. Where am I?——'tis well—'tis very well!
So that the blade be keen—the blow be sure,
'Tis well, 'tis *very* well—alas! alas!

V.

The Suburbs. POLITIAN alone.

Politian. This weakness grows upon me. I am faint,
And much I fear me ill—it will not do
To die ere I have lived!—Stay—stay thy hand,
O Azrael, yet awhile!—Prince of the Powers
Of Darkness and the Tomb, oh, pity me!
Oh, pity me! let me not perish now,
In the budding of my Paradisal Hope!
Give me to live yet—yet a little while:
'Tis I who pray for life—I who so late
Demanded but to die!—What sayest the Count?

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Enter Baldazzar.

Baldazzar. That, knowing no cause of quarrel or of feud
Between the Earl Politian and himself,
He doth decline your cartel.

Pol. *What* didst thou say?
What answer was it you brought me, good Baldazzar?
With what excessive fragrance the zephyr comes
Laden from yonder bowers!—a fairer day,
Or one more worthy Italy, methinks
No mortal eyes have seen!—*what* said the Count?

Bal. That he, Castiglione, not being aware
Of any feud existing, or any cause
Of quarrel between your lordship and himself,
Cannot accept the challenge.

Pol. It is most true—
All this is very true. When saw you, sir,
When saw you now, Baldazzar, in the frigid
Ungenial Britain which we left so lately,
A heaven so calm as this—so utterly free
From the evil taint of clouds?—and he did *say?*

Bal. No more, my lord, than I have told you, sir;
The Count Castiglione will not fight,
Having no cause for quarrel.

Pol. Now this is true—
All very true. Thou art my friend, Baldazzar,
And I have not forgotten it—thou'lt do me
A piece of service; wilt thou go back and say
Unto this man, that I, the Earl of Leicester,

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Hold him a villain?—thus much, I pr'ythee, say
Unto the Count—it is exceeding just
He should have cause for quarrel.
Bal. My lord!—my friend!——
Pol. (*aside*). 'Tis he—he comes himself!
(*aloud.*) Thou reasonest well.
I know what thou wouldst say—not send the message—
Well!—I will think of it—I will not send it.
Now pr'ythee, leave me—hither doth come a person
With whom affairs of a most private nature
I would adjust.
Bal. I go—to-morrow we meet,
Do we not?—at the Vatican.
Pol. At the Vatican. (*Exit Bal.*)

Enter Castiglione.

Cas. The Earl of Leicester here!
Pol. I *am* the Earl of Leicester, and thou seest,
Dost thou not, that I am here?
Cas. My lord, some strange,
Some singular mistake—misunderstanding—
Hath without doubt arisen: thou hast been urged
Thereby, in heat of anger, to address
Some words most unaccountable, in writing,
To me, Castiglione; the bearer being
Baldazzar, Duke of Surrey. I am aware
Of nothing which might warrant thee in this thing,

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g given thee no offense. Ha!—am I right?
as a mistake?—undoubtedly—we all
err at times.

Pol. Draw, villain, and prate no more!

Cas. Ha!—draw?—and villain? have at thee then at once,
Proud Earl! (*draws.*)

Pol. (*drawing.*) Thus to the expiatory tomb,
Untimely sepulchre, I do devote the
In the name of Lalage!

Cas. (*letting fall his sword and recoiling to the extremity of the stage.*)
Of Lalage.
Hold off!—thy sacred hand!—avaunt, I say!
Avaunt—I will not fight thee—indeed I dare not.

Pol. Thou wilt not fight with me didst say, Sir Count?
Shall I be baffled thus?—now this is well;
Didst say thou *darest* not? Ha!

Cas. I dare not—dare not—
Hold off thy hand—with that beloved name
So fresh upon thy lips I will not fight thee—
I cannot—dare not.

Pol. Now, by my halidom,
I do believe thee!—coward, I do believe thee!

Cas. Ha!—coward!—this may not be!
(*clutches his sword and staggers towards Politian, but his purpose is changed before reaching him, and he falls upon his knee at the feet of the Earl.*)
Alas! my lord.
It is—it is—most true. In such a cause

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I am the veriest coward. Oh, pity me!
Pol. (*greatly softened*). Alas!—I do—indeed I pity thee.
Cas. And Lalage——
Pol. *Scoundrel!—arise and die!*
Cas. It needeth not be—thus—thus—Oh, let me die
Thus on my bended knee. It were most fitting
That in this deep humiliation I perish.
For in the fight I will not raise a hand
Against thee, Earl of Leicester. Strike thou home— (*baring his bosom.*)
Here is no let or hindrance to thy weapon—
Strike home. I *will not* fight thee.
Pol. Now's Death and Hell!
Am I not—am I not sorely—grievously tempted
To take thee at thy word? But mark me, sir:
Think not to fly me thus. Do thou prepare
For public insult in the streets—before
The eyes of the citizens. I'll follow thee—
Like an avenging spirit I'll follow thee
Even unto death. Before those whom thou lovest—
Before all Rome I'll taunt thee, villain,—I'll taunt thee,
Dost hear? with *cowardice*—thou *wilt not* fight me?
Thou liest! thou *shalt!* (*Exit.*)
Cas. Now this indeed is just!
Most righteous, and most just, avenging Heaven!

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POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH*

[For Introduction see page 53, present volume.]

SONNET—TO SCIENCE

[First published in edition of 1829.]

SCIENCE! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?
How should he love thee? or how deem thee wise,
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

* Private reasons—some of which have reference to the sin of plagiarism, and others to the date of Tennyson's first poems† —have induced me, after some hesitation, to republish these, the crude compositions of my earliest boyhood. They are printed *verbatim*—without alteration from the original edition —the date of which is too remote to be judiciously acknowledged.—E. A. P. (1845).

† This refers to the accusation brought against Edgar Poe that he was a copyist of Tennyson.—EDITOR.

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AL AARAAF*

[First published in edition of 1829.]

PRELUDE†

Mysterious star!
Thou wert my dream
All a long summer night.
Be now my theme!
By this clear stream,
Of thee will I write;
Meantime from afar
Bathe me in light!

Thy world has not the dross of ours,
Yet all the beauty—all the flowers
That list our love or deck our bowers
In dreamy gardens, where do lie
Dreamy maidens all the day;
While the silver winds of Circassy
On violet couches faint away.
Little—oh! little dwells in thee
Like unto what on earth we see:

* A star was discovered by Tycho Brahe which appeared suddenly in the heavens—attained, in a few days, a brilliancy surpassing that of Jupiter—then as suddenly disappeared, and has never been seen since.

† These twenty-nine lines were substituted for the sonnet "To Silence" (the introduction to "Al Aaraaf" in the edition of 1829), but omitted in all subsequent collections, the sonnet being restored to its former place.—EDITOR.

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Beauty's eye is here the bluest
In the falsest and untruest—
On the sweetest air doth float
The most sad and solemn note—
If with thee be broken hearts,
Joy so peacefully departs,
That its echo still doth dwell,
Like the murmur in the shell.
Thou! thy truest type of grief
Is the gently falling leaf—
Thou! thy framing is so holy
Sorrow is not melancholy.

PART I.

O! NOTHING earthly save the ray
(Thrown back from flowers) of Beauty's eye
As in those gardens where the day
Springs from the germs of Circassy—
O! nothing earthly save the thrill
Of melody in woodland rill—
Or (music of the passion-hearted)
Joy's voice so peacefully departed
That like the murmur in the shell,
Its echo dwelleth and will dwell—
O! nothing of the dross of ours—
Yet all the beauty—all the flowers
That list our Love, and deck our bowers—
Adorn yon world afar, afar—
The wandering star.

'Twas a sweet time for Nesace—for there
Her world lay lolling on the golden air,
Near four bright suns—a temporary rest—
An oasis in desert of the blest.

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Away—away—'mid seas of rays that roll
Empyrean splendour o'er th' unchained soul—
The soul that scarce (the billows are so dense)
Can struggle to its destin'd eminence—

To distant spheres, from time to time, she rode,
And late to ours, the favor'd one of God—
But, now, the ruler of an anchor'd realm,
She throws aside the sceptre—leaves the helm,
And, amid incense and high spiritual hymns,
Laves in quadruple light her angel limbs.

Now happiest, lovliest in yon lovely Earth,
Whence sprang the "Idea of Beauty" into birth,
(Falling in wreaths thro' many a startled star,
Like woman's hair 'mid pearls, until, afar,
It lit on hills Achaian, and there dwelt),
She look'd into Infinity—and knelt.
Rich clouds, for canopies, about her curled—
Fit emblems of the model of her world—
Seen but in beauty—not impeding sight—
Of other beauty glittering thro' the light—
A wreath that twined each starry from around,
And all the opal'd air in colour bound.

All hurriedly she knelt upon a bed
Of flowers: of lilies such as rear'd the head
On the fair Capo Deucato,* and sprang
So eagerly around about to hang
Upon the flying footsteps——deep pride—
Of her who lov'd a mortal—and so died.†

* Santa Maura—Olim Deucadia.
† Sappho.

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The Sephalica, budding with young bees,
Uprear'd its purple stem around her knees:
And gemmy flower, of Trebizond misnam'd—*
Inmate of highest stars, where erst it sham'd
All other loveliness: its honied dew
(The fabled nectar that the heathen knew)
Deliriously sweet, was dropp'd from Heaven,
And fell on gardens of the unforgiven
In Trebizond—and on a sunny flower
So like its own above that, to this hour,
It still remaineth, torturing the bee
With madness, and unwonted reverie:
In Heaven, and all its environs, the leaf
And blossom of the fairy plant, in grief
Disconsolate linger—grief that hangs her head,
Repenting follies that full long have fled,
Heaving her white breast to the balmy air,
Like guilty beauty, chasten'd, and more fair:
Nyctanthes too, as sacred as the light
She fears to perfume, perfuming the night:
And Clytia† pondering between many a sun
While pettish tears adown her petals run:
And that aspiring flower that sprang on
Earth—‡

*This flower is much noticed by Lewenhoeck and Tournefort. The bee, feeding upon its blossoms, becomes intoxicated.

†Clytia—the Chrysanthemum Peruvianum, or, to employ a better-known term, the turnsol—which turns continually towards the sun, covers itself, like Peru, the country from which it comes, with dewy clouds which cool and refresh its flowers during the most violent heat of the day.—*B. de St. Pierre.*

‡There is cultivated in the king's garden at Paris, a species of serpentine aloe without prickles, whose large and beautiful flower exhales a strong odour of the vanilla, during the time of its expansion, which is very short. It does not blow till towards the month of July—you then perceive it gradually open its petals—expand them—fade and die.—*St. Pierre.*

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And died, ere scarce exalted into birth,
Bursting its odorous heart in spirit to wing
Its way to Heaven, from garden of a king:
And Valisnerian lotus thither flown*
From struggling with the waters of the Rhone:
And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante!†
Isola d'oro!—Fior di Levante!
And the Nelumbo bud that floats for ever.‡
With Indian Cupid down the holy river—
Fair flowers, and fairy! to whose care is given
To bear the Goddess' song, in odours up to Heaven:§

"Spirit! that dwellest where,
In the deep sky,
The terrible and fair,
In beauty vie!
Beyond the line of blue—
The boundary of the star
Which turneth at the view
Of thy barrier and thy bar—
Of the barrier overgone
By the comets who were cast
From their pride, and from their throne
To be drudges till the last—

* There is found, in the Rhone, a beautiful lily of the Valisnerian kind. Its stem will stretch to the length of three or four feet—thus preserving its head above water in the swellings of the river.

† The Hyacinth.

‡ It is a fiction of the Indians, that Cupid was first seen floating in one of these down the river Ganges, and that he still loves the cradle of his childhood.

§ And golden vials full of odours which are the prayers of the saints.—*Revelation of St. John.*

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To be carriers of fire
(The red fire of their heart)
With the speed that may not tire
And with pain that shall not part—
Who livest—*that* we know—
In Eternity—we feel—
But the shadow of whose brow
What spirit shall reveal?
Tho' the beings whom thy Nesace,
Thy messenger, hath known
Have dream'd for thy Infinity
A model of their own—*
Thy will is done, O God!
The star hath ridden high
Thro' many a tempest, but she rode
Beneath thy burning eye;
And here, in thought, to thee—
In thought that can alone

* The Humanitarians held that God was to be understood as having really a human form.—*Vide Clarke's Sermons*, vol. 1, page 26, fol. edit.

The drift of Milton's argument leads him to employ language which would appear, at first sight, to verge upon their doctrine; but it will be seen immediately, that he guards himself against the charge of having adopted one of the most ignorant errors of the dark ages of the Church.—*Dr. Sumner's Notes on Milton's Christian Doctrine.*

This opinion, in spite of many testimonies to the contrary, could never have been very general. Andeus, a Syrian of Mesopotamia, was condemned for the opinion, as heretical. He lived in the beginning of the fourth century. His disciples were called Anthropomorphites.—*Vide du Pin.*

Among Milton's minor poems are these lines:

Dicite sacrorum præsides nemorum Deæ, etc.,
Quis ille primus cujus ex imagine
Natura solers finxit humanum genus?
Eternus, incorruptus, æquævus polo,
Unusque et universus exemplar Dei.—And afterwards,
Non cui profundum Cæcitas lumen dedit
Dircæus augur vidit hunc alto sinu, etc.

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Ascend thy empire and so be
A partner of thy throne—
By winged Fantasy,*
My embassy is given,
Till secrecy shall knowledge be
In the environs of Heaven."

She ceas'd—and buried then her burning cheek
Abash'd, amid the lilies there, to seek
A shelter from the fervour of His eye;
For the stars trembled at the Deity.
She stirr'd not—breath'd not—for a voice was there
How solemnly pervading the calm air!
A sound of silence on the startled ear
Which dreamy poets name "the music of the sphere."
Ours is a world of words: Quiet we call
"Silence"—which is the merest word of all.
All Nature speaks, and ev'n ideal things
Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings
But ah! not so when, thus, in realms on high
The eternal voice of God is passing by,
And the red winds are withering in the sky!

"What tho' in worlds which sightless† cycles run,
Link'd to a little system, and one sun—
Where all my love is folly, and the crowd

* Seltsemen Tochter Jovis
Seinem Schosskinde
Der Phantasie.—*Goethe.*

† Sightless—too small to be seen—*Legge.*

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Still think my terrors but the thunder cloud,
The storm, the earthquake, and the ocean-wrath—
(Ah! will they cross me in my angrier path?)
What tho' in worlds which own a single sun
The sands of Time grow dimmer as they run,
Yet thin is my resplendency, so given
To bear my secrets thro' the upper Heaven.
Leave tenantless thy crystal home, and fly,
With all thy train, athwart the moony sky—
Apart—like fire-flies in Sicilian night,*
And wing to other worlds another light!
Divulge the secrets of thy embassy
To the proud orbs that twinkle—and so be
To ev'ry heart a barrier and a ban
Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man!"

Up rose the maiden in the yellow night,
The single-mooned eve!—on Earth we plight
Our faith to one love—and one moon adore—
The birth-place of young Beauty had no more.
As sprang that yellow star from downy hours,
Up rose the maiden from her shrine of flowers,
And bent o'er sheeny mountain and dim plain
Her way—but left not yet her Therasæan reign.†

* I have often noticed a peculiar movement of the fire-flies; —they will collect in a body and fly off, from a common centre, into innumerable radii.

† Therasæa, or Therasca, the island mentioned by Seneca, which, in a moment, arose from the sea to the eyes of astonished mariners.

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PART II.

High on a mountain of enamell'd head—
Such as the drowsy shepherd on his bed
Of giant pasturage lying at his ease,
Raising his heavy eyelid, starts and sees
With many a mutter'd "hope to be forgiven"
What time the moon is quadrated in Heaven—
Of rosy head, that towering far away
Into the sunlit ether, caught the ray
Of sunken suns at eve—at noon of night,
While the moon danc'd with the fair stranger light—
Uprear'd upon such height arose a pile
Of gorgeous columns on th' unburthen'd air,
Flashing from Parian marble that twin smile
Far down upon the wave that sparkled there,
And nursled the young mountain in its lair.
Of molten stars their pavement, such as fall*
Thro' the ebon air, besilvering the pall
Of their own dissolution, while they die—
Adorning then the dwellings of the sky.
A dome, by linked light from Heaven let down,
Sat gently on these columns as a crown—
A window of one circular diamond, there,
Look'd out above into the purple air,
And rays from God shot down that meteor chain
And hallow'd all the beauty twice again,
Save when, between th' Empyrean and that ring,
Some eager spirit flapp'd his dusky wing.

* Some star which, from the ruin'd roof
Of shak'd Olympus, by mischance did fall.—*Milton.*

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But on the pillars Seraph eyes have seen
The dimness of this world: that greyish green
That Nature loves the best for Beauty's grave
Lurk'd in each cornice, round each architrave—
And every sculptur'd cherub thereabout
That from his marble dwelling peeréd out,
Seem'd earthly in the shadow of his niche—
Achaian statues in a world so rich?
Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis—*
From Balbec, and the stilly, clear abyss
Of beautiful Gomorrah! Oh, the wave†
Is now upon thee—but too late to save!

Sound loves to revel in a summer night:
Witness the murmur of the grey twilight
That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco,‡
Of many a wild star-gazer long ago—
That stealeth ever on the ear of him
Who, musing, gazeth on the distance dim,

* Voltaire, in speaking of Persepolis, says, "Je connois bien l'admiration qu'inspirent ces ruines—mais un palais érigé au pied d'une chaîne, de rochers stériles—peut-il être un chef d'œuvre des arts!"

† "Oh, the wave"—Ula Deguisi is the Turkish appellation: but, on its own shores, it is called Bahar Loth, or Almotanah. There were undoubtedly more than two cities engulfed in the "dead sea." In the valley of Siddim were five—Adrah, Zeboin, Zoar, Sodom and Gomorrah. Stephen of Byzantium mentions eight, and Strabo thirteen (engulphed)—but the last is out of all reason.

It is said [Tacitus, Strabo, Josephus, Daniel of St. Saba, Nau, Maundrell, Troilo D'Arvieux], that after an excessive drought, the vestiges of columns, walls, etc., are seen above the surface. At *any* season, such remains may be discovered by looking down into the transparent lake, and at such distances as would argue the existence of many settlements in the space now usurped by the "Asphaltites."

‡ Eyraco—Chaldea.

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And sees the darkness coming as a cloud—
Is not its form—its voice—most palpable and
loud?*

But what is this?—it cometh—and it brings
A music with it—'tis the rush of wings—
A pause—and then a sweeping, falling strain,
And Nesace is in her halls again.
From the wild energy of wanton haste
Her cheeks were flushing, and her lips apart;
The zone that clung around her gentle waist
Had burst beneath the heaving of her heart.
Within the centre of that hall to breathe
She paus'd and panted, Zanthe! all beneath,
The fairy light that kiss'd her golden hair
And long'd to rest, yet could but sparkle there!

Young flowers were whispering in melody†
To happy flowers that night—and tree to tree;
Fountains were gushing music as they fell
In many a star-lit grove, or moon-light dell;
Yet silence came upon material things—
Fair flowers, bright waterfalls and angel wings—
And sound alone that from the spirit sprang
Bore burthen to the charm the maiden sang:

"'Neath blue-bell or streamer—
Or tufted wild spray
That keeps, from the dreamer,

* I have often thought I could distinctly hear the sound of the darkness as it stole over the horizon.

† Fairies use flowers for their charactery.—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

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The moonbeam away—*
Bright beings! that ponder,
With half-closing eyes,
On the stars which your wonder
Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance thro' the shade, and
Come down to your brow
Like—eyes of the maiden
Who calls on you now—
Arise! from your dreaming
In violet bowers,
To duty beseeming
These star-litten hours—
And shake from your tresses
Encumber'd with dew
The breath of those kisses
That cumber them too—
(O! how, without you, Love!
Could angels be blest?)
Those kisses of true love
That lull'd ye to rest!
Up! shake from your wing
Each hindering thing:
The dew of the night—
It would weigh down your flight;
And true love caresses—
O! leave them apart!
They are light on the tresses,
But lead on the heart.

* In Scripture is this passage—"The sun shall not harm thee by day, nor the moon by night." It is, perhaps, not generally known that the moon, in Egypt, has the effect of producing blindness to those who sleep with the face exposed to its rays, to which circumstance the passage evidently alludes.

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Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one!
Whose harshest idea
Will to melody run,
O! is it thy will
On the breezes to toss?
Or, capriciously still,
Like the lone Albatross,*
Incumbent on night
(As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
On the harmony there?

Ligeia! wherever
Thy image may be,
No magic shall sever
Thy music from thee.
Thou hast bound many eyes
In a dreamy sleep—
But the strains still arise
Which *thy* vigilance keep—
The sound of the rain
Which leaps down to the flower,
And dances again
In the rhythm of the shower—
The murmur that springs†
From the growing of grass
Are the music of things—

* The Albatross is said to sleep on the wing.

† I met with this idea in an old English tale, which I am now unable to obtain, and quote from memory:—"The verie essence and, as it were, springe heade and origine of all musicke is the verie pleasaunte sounde which the trees of the forest do make when they growe."

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But are modell'd, alas!—
Away, then, my dearest,
O! hie thee away
To springs that lie clearest
Beneath the moon-ray—
To lone lake that smiles,
In its dream of deep rest,
At the many star-isles
That enjewel its breast—
Where wild flowers, creeping,
Have mingled their shade,
On its margin is sleeping
Full many a maid—
Some have left the cool glade, and
Have slept with the bee—*
Arouse them, my maiden,
On moorland and lea—
Go! breathe on their slumber
All softly in ear,
The musical number
They slumber'd to hear—
For what can awaken
An angel so soon
Whose sleep hath been taken
Beneath the cold moon,
As the spell which no slumber

* The wild bee will not sleep in the shade if there be moonlight.

The rhyme in this verse, as in one about sixty lines before, has an appearance of affectation. It is, however, imitated from Sir W. Scott, or rather from Claud Halcro—in whose mouth I admired its effect:

O! were there an island,
Tho' ever so wild,
Where woman might smile, and
No man be beguil'd, etc.

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Of witchery may test,
The rhythmical number
Which lull'd him to rest?"

Spirits in wing, and angels to the view,
A thousand seraphs burst th' Empyrean thro',
Young dreams still hovering on their drowsy flight—
Seraphs in all but "Knowledge," the keen light
That fell, refracted, thro' thy bounds afar,
O Death! from eye of God upon that star:
Sweet was that error—sweeter still that death—
Sweet was that error—ev'n with *us* the breath
Of Science dims the mirror of our joy—
To them 'twere the Simoom, and would destroy—
For what (to them) availeth it to know
That Truth is Falsehood—or that Bliss is Woe?
Sweet was their death—with them to die was rife
With the last ecstasy of satiate life—
Beyond that death no immortality—
But sleep that pondereth and is not "to be"—
And there—oh! may my weary spirit dwell—
Apart from Heaven's Eternity—and yet how far from Hell!*

* With the Arabians there is a medium between Heaven and Hell, where men suffer no punishment, but yet do not attain that tranquil and even happiness which they suppose to be characteristic of heavenly enjoyment.

Un no rompido sueño—
Un dia puro—allegre—libre
Quiera—
Libre de amor—de zelo—
De odio—de esperanza—de rezelo.—*Luis Ponce de Leon.*

Sorrow is not excluded from "Al Aaraaf," but it is that

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What guilty spirit, in what shrubbery dim,
Heard not the stirring summons of that hymn?
But two: they fell: for Heaven no grace imparts
To those who hear not for their beating hearts.
A maiden-angel and her seraph-lover—
O! where (and ye may seek the wide skies over)
Was Love, the blind, near sober Duty known?
Unguided Love hath fallen—'mid "tears of perfect moan.†

He was a goodly spirit—he who fell:
A wanderer by moss-ymantled well—
A gazer on the lights that shine above—
A dreamer in the moonbeam by his love:
What wonder? for each star is eye-like there,
And looks so sweetly down on Beauty's hair—
And they, and ev'ry mossy spring were holy
To his love-haunted heart and melancholy.
The night had found (to him a night of wo)
Upon a mountain crag, young Angelo—
Beetling it bends athwart the solemn sky,
And scowls on starry worlds that down beneath it lie.
Here sate he with his love—his dark eye bent
With eagle gaze along the firmament:
Now turn'd it upon her—but ever then
It trembled to the orb of EARTH again.

sorrow which the living love to cherish for the dead, and which, in some minds, resembles the delirium of opium. The passionate excitement of Love and the buoyancy of spirit attendant upon intoxication are its less holy pleasures—the price of which, to those souls who make choice of "Al Aaraaf," as their residence after life, is final death and annihilation.

† There be tears of perfect moan
Wept for thee in Helicon.—*Milton.*

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"Ianthe, dearest, see! how dim that ray!
How lovely 'tis to look so far away!
She seemed not thus upon that autumn eve
I left her gorgeous halls—nor mourned to leave.
That eve—that eve—I should remember well—
The sun-ray dropped, in Lemnos with a spell
On th' Arabesque carving of a gilded hall
Wherein I sate, and on the draperied wall—
And on my eye-lids—O, the heavy light!
How drowsily it weighed them into night!
On flowers, before, and mist, and love they ran
With Persian Saadi in his Gulistan:
But O, that light!—I slumbered—Death, the while,
Stole o'er my senses in that lovely isle
So softly that no single silken hair
Awoke that slept—or knew that he was there.

"The last spot of Earth's orb I trod upon
Was a proud temple called the Parthenon;*
More beauty clung around her columned wall
Than even thy glowing bosom beats withal,†
And when old Time my wing did disenthral
Thence sprang I—as the eagle from his tower,
And years I left behind me in an hour.
What time upon her airy bounds I hung,
One half the garden of her globe was flung
Unrolling as a chart unto my view—
Tenantless cities of the desert too!
Ianthe, beauty crowded on me then,

* It was entire in 1687—the most elevated spot in Athens

† Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the queen of love.—*Marlowe.*

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And half I wished to be again of men."
"My Angelo! and why of them to be?
A brighter dwelling-place is here for thee—
And greener fields than in yon world above,
And woman's loveliness—and passionate love."

"But list, Ianthe! when the air so soft
Failed, as my pennoned spirit leapt aloft.‡
Perhaps my brain grew dizzy—but the world
I left so late was into chaos hurled,
Sprang from her station, on the winds apart,
And rolled a flame, the fiery Heaven athwart.
Methought, my sweet one, then I ceased to soar,
And fell—not swiftly as I rose before,
But with a downward, tremulous motion thro'
Light, brazen rays, this golden star unto!
Nor long the measure of my falling hours,
For nearest of all stars was thine to ours—
Dread star! that came, amid a night of mirth,
A red Dædalion on the timid Earth."

"We came—and to thy Earth—but not to us
Be given our lady's bidding to discuss:
We came, my love; around, above, below,
Gay fire-fly of the night we come and go,
Nor ask a reason save the angel-nod
She grants to us as granted by her God—
But, Angelo, than thine grey Time unfurled
Never his fairy wing o'er fairer world!
Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
Alone could see the phantom in the skies,
When first Al Aaraaf knew her course to be

‡ Pennon, for pinion.—*Milton.*

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Headlong thitherward o'er the starry sea—
But when its glory swelled upon the sky,
As glowing Beauty's burst beneath man's eye,
We paused before the heritage of men,
And thy star trembled—as doth Beauty then!"

Thus in discourse, the lovers whiled away
The night that waned and waned and brought no day
They fell: for Heaven to them no hope imparts
Who hear not for the beating of their hearts.

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TAMERLANE

[Published in editions of 1827, 1829 and 1831, with notes and various lines which were omitted in the present text (edition of 1845).]

KIND solace in a dying hour!
Such, father, is not (now) my theme—
I will not madly deem that power
Of Earth may strive me of the sin
Unearthly pride hath revelled in—
I have no time to dote or dream:
You call it hope—that fire of fire!
It is but agony of desire:
If I *can* hope—O God! I can—
Its fount is holier—more divine—
I would not call thee fool, old man,
But such is not a gift of thine.

Know thou the secret of a spirit
Bowed from its wild pride into shame.
O yearning heart! I did inherit
Thy withering portion with the fame,
The searing glory which hath shone
Amid the Jewels of my throne,
Halo of Hell! and with a pain
Not Hell shall make me fear again—

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O craving heart, for the lost flowers
And sunshine of my summer hours!
The undying voice of that dead time,
With its interminable chime,
Rings, in the spirit of a spell,
Upon thy emptiness—a knell.

I have not always been as now:
The fevered diadem on my brow
I claimed and won usurpingly—
Hath not the same fierce heirdom given
Rome to the Cæsar—this to me?
The heritage of a kingly mind,
And a proud spirit which hath striven
Triumphantly with human kind.

On mountain soil I first drew life:
The mists of the Taglay have shed
Nightly their dews upon my head,
And I believe, the wingéd strife
And tumult of the headlong air
Have nestled in my very hair.

So late from Heaven—that dew—it fell
('Mid dreams of an unholy night)
Upon me with the touch of Hell,
While the red flashing of the light
From clouds that hung, like banners, o'er
Appeared to my half-closing eye
The pageantry of monarchy;
And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar
Came hurriedly upon me, telling
Of human battle, where my voice,

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My own voice, silly child!—was swelling
(O! how my spirit would rejoice,
And leap within me at the cry)
The battle-cry of Victory!

The rain came down upon my head
Unsheltered—and the heavy wind
Rendered me mad and deaf and blind.
It was but man, I thought, who shed
Laurels upon me: and the rush—
The torrent of the chilly air
Gurgled within my ear the crush
Of empires—with the captive's prayer—
The hum of suitors—and the tone
Of flattery 'round a sovereign's throne.

My passions, from that hapless hour,
Usurped a tyranny which men
Have deemed since I have reached to power,
My innate nature—be it so:
But, father, there lived one who, then,
Then—in my boyhood—when their fire
Burned with a still intenser glow
(For passion must, with youth, expire)
E'en *then* who knew this iron heart
In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words—alas!—to tell
The loveliness of loving well!
Nor would I now attempt to trace
The more than beauty of a face
Whose lineaments, upon my mind,
Are —— shadows on th' unstable wind:

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Thus I remember having dwelt
Some page of early lore upon,
With loitering eye, till I have felt
The letters—with their meaning—melt
To fantasies—with none.

O, she was worthy of all love!
Love as in infancy was mine—
'Twas such as angel minds above
Might envy; her young heart the shrine
On which my every hope and thought
Were incense—then a goodly gift,
For they were childish and upright—
Pure—as her young example taught:
Why did I leave it, and, adrift,
Trust to the fire within, for light?

We grew in age—and love—together—
Roaming the forest, and the wild;
My breast her shield in wintry weather—
And, when the friendly sunshine smiled.
And she would mark the opening skies,
I saw no Heaven—but in her eyes.
Young Love's first lesson is —— the heart:
For 'mid that sunshine, and those smiles,
When, from our little cares apart,
And laughing at her girlish wiles,
I'd throw me on her throbbing breast,
And pour my spirit out in tears—
There was no need to speak the rest—
No need to quiet any fears
Of her—who asked no reason why,
But turned on me her quiet eye!

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Yet *more* than worthy of the love
My spirit struggled with, and strove,
When, on the mountain peak, alone,
Ambition lent it a new tone—
I had no being—but in thee:
  The world, and all it did contain
In the earth—the air—the sea—
  Its joy—its little lot of pain
That was new pleasure—the ideal,
  Dim, vanities of dreams by night —
And dimmer nothings which were real—
  (Shadows—and a more shadowy light!)
Parted upon their misty wings,
    And, so, confusedly, became
    Thine image and—a name—a name!
Two separate—yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious—have you know
    The passion, father? You have not:
A cottager, I marked a throne
Of half the world as all my own,
    And murmured at such lowly lot—
But, just like any other dream,
    Upon the vapour of the dew
My own had past, did not the beam
    Of beauty which did while it thro'
The minute—the hour—the day—oppress
My mind with double loveliness.

We walked together on the crown
Of a high mountain which looked down
Afar from its proud natural towers
  Of rock and forest, on the hills—

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The dwindled hills! begirt with bowers
And shouting with a thousand rills.

I spoke to her of power and pride,
But mystically—in such guise
That she might deem it nought beside
The moment's converse; in her eyes
I read, perhaps too carelessly—
A mingled feeling with my own—
The flush on her bright cheek, to me
Seemed to become a queenly throne
Too well that I should let it be
Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapped myself in grandeur then,
And donned a visionary crown—
Yet is was not that Fantasy
Had thrown her mantle over me—
But that, among the rabble—men,
Lion ambition is chained down—
And crouches to a keeper's hand—
Not so in deserts where the grand—
The wild—the terrible conspire
With their own breath to fan his fire.

Look 'round thee now on Samarcand!—
Is she not queen of Earth? her pride
Above all cities? in her hand
Their destinies? in all beside
Of glory which the world hath known
Stands she not nobly and alone?
Falling—her veriest stepping-stone
Shall form the pedestal of a throne—

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And who her sovereign? Timour—he
  Whom the astonished people saw
Striding o'er empires haughtily
  A diademed outlaw!

O, human love! thou spirit given,
On Earth, of all we hope in Heaven!
Which fall'st into the soul like rain
Upon the Siroc-withered plain,
And, failing in thy power to bless,
But leav'st the heart a wilderness!
Idea! which bindest life around
With music of so strange a sound
And beauty of so wild a birth—
Farewell! for I have won the Earth.

When Hope, the eagle that towered, could see
  No cliff beyond him in the sky,
His pinions were bent droopingly—
  And homeward turned his softened eye.
'Twas sunset: when the sun will part
There comes a sullenness of heart
To him who still would look upon
The glory of the summer sun.
That soul will hate the ev'ning mist
So often lovely, and will list
To the sound of the coming darkness (known
To those whose spirits hearken) as one
Who, in a dream of night, *would* fly,
But *cannot*, from a danger nigh.

What tho' the moon—tho' the white moon
Shed all the splendour of her noon,

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Her smile is chilly—and *her* beam,
In that time of dreariness, will seem
(So like you gather in your breath)
A portrait taken after death.

And boyhood is a summer sun
Whose waning is the dreariest one—
For all we live to know is known,
And all we seek to keep hath flown—
Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall
With the noon-day beauty—which is all.

I reached my home—my home no more—
For all had flown who made it so.
I passed from out its mossy door,
And, tho' my tread was soft and low,
A voice came from the threshold stone
Of one whom I had earlier known—
O, I defy thee, Hell, to show
On beds of fire that burn below,
An humbler heart—a deeper wo.

Father, I firmly do believe—
I *know*—for Death who comes for me
From regions of the blest afar,
Where there is nothing to deceive,
Hath left his iron gate ajar,
And rays of truth you cannot see
Are flashing thro' Eternity——
I do believe that Eblis hath
A snare in every human path—
Else how, when in the holy grove
I wandered of the idol, Love,—

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Who daily scents his snowy wings
With incense of burnt-offerings
From the most unpolluted things,
Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven
Above the trellised rays from Heaven
No mote may shun—no tiniest fly—
The light'ning of his eagle eye—
How was it that Ambition crept,
  Unseen, amid the revels there,
Till growing bold, he laughed and leapt
  In the tangles of Love's very hair?

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TO HELEN*

[First published in the edition of 1831.]

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window niche,
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand!
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

* Mrs. Stanard.

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THE VALLEY OF UNREST *

Once it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars
Nightly, from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midst of which all day
The red sun-light lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless—
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Unceasingly, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye—
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave:—from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep:—from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.

* The present version (edition of 1845) differs widely from the original poem, which appeared in the edition of 1831, under title of "The Valley Nis."

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ISRAFEL*

[First published in the edition of 1831.]

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
"Whose heart-strings are a lute;"
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy Stars (so legends tell),
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
In her highest noon,
The enamoured Moon
Blushes with love,
While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,
Which were seven),
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And other listening things)

* And the angel Israfel [whose heart-strings are a lute and]† who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.—*Koran.*

† The words in brackets were not in Poe's original note, but are his own interpolation later.—EDITOR.

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That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
  By which he sits and sings—
  The trembling living wire
  Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
  Where deep thoughts are a duty—
Where Love's a grown-up God—
  Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
  Which we worship in a star.

Therefore, thou are not wrong,
  Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
  Best bard, because the wisest!
Merrily live and long!

The ecstacies above
  With thy burning measures suit—
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
  With the fervour of thy lute—
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
  Is a world of sweets and sours;
  Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
  Is the sunshine of ours.

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If I could dwell
Where Israfel
  Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
  A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
  From my lyre within the sky.

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TO ——*

I [redacted] not that my earthly lot
Hath little of Earth in it,
That years of love have been forgot
In the hatred of a minute:—
I mourn not that the desolate
Are happier, sweet, than I,
But that *you* sorrow for *my* fate
Who am a passer-by.

* The final form of a poem of five quatrains, which appeared in the edition of 1829, under title, "To M——," and in MS. under title of "Alone."—EDITOR.

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TO ——

[First published in the edition of 1829.]

THE bowers whereat, in dreams, I see
The wantonest singing birds,
Are lips—and all thy melody
Of lip-begotten words—

Thine eyes, in Heaven of heart enshrined
Then desolately fall,
O God! on my funereal mind
Like starlight on a pall—

Thy heart—*thy* heart!—I wake and sigh,
And sleep to dream till day
Of truth that gold can never buy—
Of the baubles that it may.

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TO THE RIVER ——

[First published in the edition of 1829.]

Fair river! in thy bright, clear flow
Of crystal, wandering water,
Thou art an emblem of the glow
Of beauty—the unhidden heart—
The playful maziness of art
In old Alberto's daughter;

But when within thy wave she looks—
Which glistens then, and trembles—
Why, then, the prettiest of brooks
Her worshipper resembles;
For in his heart, as in thy stream,
Her image deeply lies—
His heart which trembles at the beam
Of her soul-searching eyes.

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"I SAW THEE ON THY BRIDAL DAY"

[First published in the edition of 1827.]

I saw thee on thy bridal day—
  When a burning blush came o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
  The world all love before thee:

And in thine eye a kindling light
  (Whatever it might be)
Was all on Earth my aching sight
  Of Loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, with maiden shame—
  As such it well may pass—
Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame
  In the breast of him, alas!

Who saw thee on that bridal day,
  When that deep blush *would* come o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
  The world all love before thee.

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SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

[First published in the edition of 1827 under title of "Visit of the Dead."]

THY soul shall find itself alone
'Mid dark thoughts of the gray tomb-stone—
Not one, of all the crowd, to pry
Into thine hour of secrecy.

Be silent in that solitude
Which is not loneliness—for then
The spirits of the dead who stood
In life before thee are again
In death around thee—and their will
Shall overshadow thee: be still.

The night—tho' clear—shall frown—
And the stars shall not look down
From their high thrones in the Heaven,
With light like Hope to mortals given—
But their red orbs, without beam,
To thy weariness shall seem
As a burning and a fever
Which would cling to thee for ever.

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Now are thoughts thou shalt not banish—
Now are visions ne'er to vanish—
From thy spirit shall they pass
No more—like dew-drops from the grass.

The breeze—the breath of God—is still—
And the mist upon the hill
Shadowy—shadowy—yet unbroken,
Is a symbol and a token—
How it hangs upon the trees,
A mystery of mysteries!

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A DREAM

[First published in the edition of 1827, without title.]

In visions of the dark night
I have dreamed of joy departed—
But a waking dream of life and light
Hath left me broken-hearted.

Ah! what is not a dream by day
To him whose eyes are cast
On things around him with a ray
Turned back upon the past?

That holy dream—that holy dream,
While all the world were chiding,
Hath cheered me as a lovely beam,
A lonely spirit guiding.

What though that light, thro' storm and night
So trembled from afar—
What could there be more purely bright
In Truth's day-star?

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ROMANCE*

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing,
With drowsy head and folded wing,
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake,
To me a painted paroquet
Hath been—a most familiar bird—
Taught me my alphabet to say—
To lisp my very earliest word
While in the wild wood I did lie,
A child—with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years
So shake the very Heaven on high
With tumult as they thunder by,
I have no time for idle cares
Though gazing on the unquiet sky.
And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings—
That little time with lyre and rhyme
To while away—forbidden things!
My heart would feel to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the strings.

* This poem constituted the introduction of the 1831 volume, with the addition of the following forty-five lines:

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Succeeding years, too wild for song,
Then rolled like tropic storms along,
Where, through the garish lights that fly
Dying along the troubled sky,
Lay bare, through vistas thunder-riven,
The blackness of the general Heaven,
That very blackness yet doth fling
Light on the lightning's silver wing.

For being an idle boy lang syne,
Who read Anacreon and drank wine,
I early found Anacreon rhymes
Were almost passionate sometimes—
And by strange alchemy of brain
His pleasures always turned to pain—
His naïveté to wild desire—
His wit to love—his wine to fire—
And so, being young and dipt in folly,
I fell in love with melancholy,
And used to throw my earthly rest
And quiet all away in jest—
I could not love except where Death
Was mingling his with Beauty's breath—
Or Hymen, Time, and Destiny,
Were stalking between her and me.

. . . . . .

But *now* my soul hath too much room—
Gone are the glory and the gloom—
The black hath mellow'd into grey,
And all the fires are fading away.

My draught of passion hath been deep—
I revell'd, and I now would sleep—
And after drunkenness of soul
Succeeds the glories of the bowl—
An idle longing night and day
To dream my very life away.

But dreams—of those who dream as I,
Aspiringly, are damned, and die:
Yet should I swear I mean alone,
By notes so very shrilly blown,
To break upon Time's monotone,
While yet my vapid joy and grief
Are tintless of the yellow leaf—
Why not an imp the greybeard hath,
Will shake his shadow in my path—
And e'en the greybeard will o'erlook
Cunningly my dreaming-book.

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FAIRYLAND

[First published in the edition of 1829. The version of 1831 differs widely from the present (1845).]

Dim vales—and shadowy floods—
And cloudy-looking woods,
Whose forms we can't discover
For the tears that drip all over
Huge moons there wax and wane—
Again—again— again—
Every moment of the night—
For ever changing places—
And they put out the star-light
With the breath from their pale faces.
About twelve by the moon-dial
One more filmy than the rest
(A kind which, upon trial,
They have found to be the best)
Comes down—still down—and down
With its centre on the crown
Of a mountain's eminence,
While its wide circumference
In easy drapery falls
Over hamlets, over halls,
Wherever they may be—

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O'er the strange woods—o'er the sea—
Over spirits on the wing—
Over every drowsy thing—
And buries them up quite
In a labyrinth of light—
And then, how deep!—O, deep!
Is the passion of their sleep.
In the morning they arise,
And their moony covering
Is soaring in the skies,
With the tempests as they toss,
Like——almost any thing—
Or a yellow Albatross.
They use that moon no more
For the same end as before—
Videlicet, a tent—
Which I think extravagant:
Its atomies, however,
Into a shower dissever,
Of which those butterflies,
Of Earth, who seek the skies,
And so come down again
(Never-contented things!)
Have brought a specimen
Upon their quivering wings.

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THE LAKE: TO ——

[First published in the edition of 1827.]

In spring of youth it was my lot
To haunt of the wide world a spot
The which I could not love the less—
So lovely was the loneliness
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound,
And the tall pines that towered around.

But when the Night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot, as upon all,
And the mystic wind went by
Murmuring in melody—
Then—ah, then, I would awake
To the terror of the lone lake.

Yet that terror was not fright,
But a tremulous delight—
A feeling not the jewelled mine
Could teach or bribe me to define—
Nor Love—although the Love were thine.

Death was in that poisonous wave,
And in its gulf a fitting grave
For him who thence could solace bring
To his lone imagining—
Whose solitary soul could make
An Eden of that dim lake.

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EVENING STAR

[First published in the edition of 1827.]

'Twas noontide of summer,
And midtime of night,
And stars, in their orbits,
Shone pale, through the light
Of the brighter, cold moon.
'Mid planets her slaves,
Herself in the Heavens,
Her beam on the waves.

I gazed awhile
On her cold smile;
Too cold—too cold for me—
There passed, as a shroud,
A fleecy cloud,
And I turned away to thee,
Proud Evening Star,
In thy glory afar
And dearer thy beam shall be;
For joy to my heart
Is the proud part
Thou bearest in Heaven at night,
And more I admire
Thy distant fire,
Than that colder, lowly light.

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"THE HAPPIEST DAY"

[First published in the edition of 1827.]

I.

THE happiest day—the happiest hour
My seared and blighted heart hath known,
The highest hope of pride and power,
I feel hath flown.

II.

Of power! said I? Yes! such I ween
But they have vanished long, alas!
The visions of my youth have been—
But let them pass.

III.

And pride, what have I now with thee?
Another brow may ev'n inherit
The venom thou hast poured on me—
Be still my spirit!

IV.

The happiest day—the happiest hour
Mine eyes shall see—have ever seen
The brightest glance of pride and power
I feel—have been:

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v.

But were that hope of pride and power
  Now offered with the pain
Ev'n *then* I felt—that brightest hour
  I would not live again:

vi.

For on its wing was dark alloy
  And as it fluttered—fell
An essence—powerful to destroy
  A soul that knew it well.

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DREAMS

[First published in the edition of 1827.]

Oh! that my young life were a lasting dream!
My spirit not awakening, till the beam
Of an Eternity should bring the morrow.
Yes! though that long dream were of hopeless sorrow,
'Twere better than the cold reality
Of waking life, to him whose heart must be,
And hath been still, upon the lovely earth,
A chaos of deep passion, from his birth.
But should it be—that dream eternally
Continuing—as dreams have been to me
In my young boyhood—should it thus be given,
'Twere folly still to hope for higher Heaven.
For I have revelled when the sun was bright
I' the summer sky, in dreams of living light
And loveliness,—have left my very heart
In climes of my imagining, apart
From mine own home, with beings that have been
Of mine own thought—what more could I have seen?
'Twas once—and only once—and the wild hour

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From my remembrance shall not pass—some
power
Or spell had bound me—'twas the chilly wind
Came o'er me in the night, and left behind
Its image on my spirit—or the moon
Shone on my slumbers in her lofty noon
Too coldly—or the stars—howe'er it was
That dream was as that night-wind—let it pass.

I have been happy, though [but] in a dream.
I have been happy—and I love the theme:
Dreams! in their vivid colouring of life
As in that fleeting, shadowy, misty strife
Of semblance with reality which brings
To the delirious eye, more lovely things
Of Paradise and Love—and all our own!—
Than young Hope in his sunniest hour hath
known.

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"IN YOUTH I HAVE KNOWN ONE"

[First published in the edition of 1827.]

How often we forget all time, when lone
Admiring Nature's universal throne;
Her woods—her wilds—her mountains—the intense
Reply of HERS *to our intelligence!*
[BYRON: *The Island.*]

I.

In youth I have known one with whom the Earth
In secret communing held—as he with it,
In daylight, and in beauty, from his birth:
Whose fervid, flickering torch of life was lit
From the sun and stars, whence he had drawn forth
A passionate light—such for his spirit was fit—
And yet that spirit knew—not in the hour
Of its fervour—what had o'er it power.

II.

Perhaps it may be that my mind is wrought
To a fever by the moonbeam that hangs o'er,
But I will half believe that wild light fraught
With more of sovereignty than ancient lore

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Hath ever told—or is it of a thought
The unembodied essence, and no more
That with a quickening spell doth o'er us pass
As dew of the night-time, o'er the summer grass?

III.

Doth o'er us pass, when, as th' expanding eye
To the loved object—so the tear to the lid
Will start, which lately slept in apathy?
And yet it need not be—(that object) hid
From us in life—but common—which doth lie
Each hour before us—but then only bid
With a strange sound, as of a harp-string broken
T' awake us—'Tis a symbol and a token

IV.

Of what in other worlds shall be—and given
In beauty by our God, to those alone
Who otherwise would fall from life and Heaven
Drawn by their heart's passion, and that tone,
That high tone of the spirit which hath striven
Though not with Faith—with godliness—whose throne
With desperate energy 't hath beaten down;
Wearing its own deep feeling as a crown.

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